### PRIVATE THOUGHTS

UPONA

## CHRISTIAN LIFE:

Or, Necessary

## DIRECTIONS

FORITS

# BEGINNING and PROGRESS upon Earth,

In Order to its FINAL PERFECTION in the

### BEATIFICK VISION.

#### PART II.

By the Right Reverend Father in GOD,

## WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

late Lord Bishop of St. Asaph.

Written by HIM in his riper Years, and Printed from his ORIGINAL MANUSCRIPTS.

The Sixth Edition, illustrated and adorned with Sculptures.

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#### THE

## PREFACE.

HE kind reception which has been given to all the other works of this incomparable Author, particularly to his *Private Thoughts*, written in his younger years, has encouraged the

publishing of another volume of his Thoughts, upon Subjects of the most importance to the christian life, in all the chief scenes of it; and those compos'd when age and experience, in the course of his parochial ministry, had taught him what directions were most necessary for the conduct of every disciple of Christ, through all the stages of that race that is set before us, that he so run that he may obtain. Accordingly, the reader is here furnish'd, not only with such instructions as are most proper for the entrance upon this race, and the early discipline of those who are new listed under Christ's banner, but

also with such other points, both of faith and practice, as are most sit to be afterwards inculcated and press'd upon them, for their successful carrying on of this holy warfare, and finishing their course, so as at last to attain the crown of righteousness, laid up for all those that continue Christ's faithful soldiers and servants to their lives end.

As in his Private Thoughts and Resolutions, this excellent Bishop seems to have chiefly aim'd at fettling his own principles, and regulating his practice, as became a follower of the holy Jesus, and a minister of his gospel: So in these, which are more publick, he carries on the same pious defign with respect to others, and executes that facred office, for which those were to prepare Indeed, great and indefatigable as his labours were, (for few ever labour'd more) the end of them was always the falvation of fouls. And as that spirit of piety which runs through all his writings, together with his plain, unaffected, familiar, and yet most solid way of argument and persuasion, are both admirably adapted to this great end; (to fay nothing of all his other daily and unwearied pains in the ministry while living) so, through God's great bleffing upon his endeavours, they were then, and have been fince, crown'd with great fuccess; and it is the hopes and prayers of all good men, that they may continue so to be, to the end of the world, and daily add to our holiness and his happiness.

Among many instances that might be given of this happy fuccess, I have now one before me, in a relation of the behaviour of one of this vigilant pastor's flock, in his last sickness, as it is attested by eye-witness of it: I will not trouble the reader with the particulars; the fum is, that this pious gentleman, with his last breath express'd so much refignation to God's will, and so little fear of death, such comfort in reflecting upon the better part of his life, especially his charity to the poor, and so much zeal in recommending that duty to those about him, and above all, such an anticipation of those extasses of joy and happiness which he was going to in another world, and fo uncommon and enlarg'd an understanding of the great mysteries of religion; that if, in the midst of these holy raptures, he had not own'd his great obligations to Dr. Beveridge for these spiritual bleffings, yet we might have eafily judg'd that so great a proficient in the school of religion, could be indebted, under God, to the care and instruction of no less a master for fuch extraordinary acquirements.

And, with respect to that good, which it is piously hop'd this great Prelate's works have done since his death, and may continue to do daily, it has been observed by some devout persons, that since the publication of them, our churches have been generally suller than they used to be; to which, as nothing would contribute more, than that spirit of devotion and true piety, which in all his practical writings this holy man both expresses himself, and labours to create in others:

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fo, if after all these pious endeavours to cultivate and promote it in the world, we are sensible of the least growth of it, I know not why we may not ascribe so good an effect to the blessing of God upon so probable a cause.

However, if the piety of some amongst us, which we hope increaseth, be not a sufficient argument of a probable increase of true religion, to be expected from the influence of this great man's works, yet I am forry to fay, that the wickedness of others does abundantly make up that defect; I mean the restless endeavours of all the enemies of God and religion, to discredit and defame them; if by any means they could be able to ward fuch a blow to the kingdom of darkness, as they feem to apprehend from his pious labours. And what wonder if those who mock God, and would bring religion it felf into contempt, use their utmost endeavours to blast the reputation of an author, whose writings are fo eminently ferviceable to religion, and tend fo much to advance the glory of God? all their attempts of this nature are fo many arguments of the excellency of what they would decry; they are the testimonies even of enemies, in behalf of those admirable books which they pretend to ridicule: and all the fcorn and contempt they express upon this occasion, reflects more honour upon bishop Beveridge and his works; I had almost said, even than the approbation and esteem of all his and religion's friends. So much good does God in his infinite wifdom and mercy produce out of the greatest evil, by turning all the WIE

wit and malice of these reprobates against themfelves, and making them, even against their own wills, instruments of sounding forth the praises of this excellent writer, at the same time, and by the very same means, that they vainly attempt to dishonour and reproach him; as the devils themselves were forc'd to own our blessed Saviour, tho' they knew he came on purpose to destroy them. It were only to be wish'd, that in this, as in most other instances, those children of this world, were not, in their generation, so much wiser than the children of light. 'Tis true, we may as well fear that dogs should bark out the moon, as that the utmost malice of these enemies to truth, shall ever be able to fully a reputation that has long shin'd with so much brightness among all learned and good men, both at home and abroad; infomuch, that when this illustrious prelate was dying, one of the chief of his order deservedly said of him, There goes one of the greatest and of the best men that ever England bred. No, we have feen that all their attempts against him do but add lustre to his fame: however, it cannot be less the interest of religion to promote the works of fo able a divine, than it is that of atheism and irreligion to oppose them; and if all good men would shew as much zeal in the defence of them and their great author, and be as industrious to recommend both his writings. and example, as atheifts and libertines are to obstruct the influences of both, this would still be another addition to the glory of fo great a name; and the good effects we might hope for on the lives of men, from fuch excellent books.

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dispers'd into many hands, would be, at once the best attestation that could be given to the wondrous benefit and usefulness of them, and also the most effectual means to stop the mouths of gainsayers, by lessening the number of them daily, and bringing them over from insidelity and atheism to the cause of God and religion.

And I cannot close this Preface better, than with earnest prayers to God, that this, and all the other works of bishop Beveridge, may have that blessed effect; and that in return to all the malice of those, who seem to envy us the great good we may hope for from such pious and instructive discourses, they may, by degrees, instil even into their breasts some of that spirit of piety dissurd through every page; and of atheists and libertines, make them sober men and christians.





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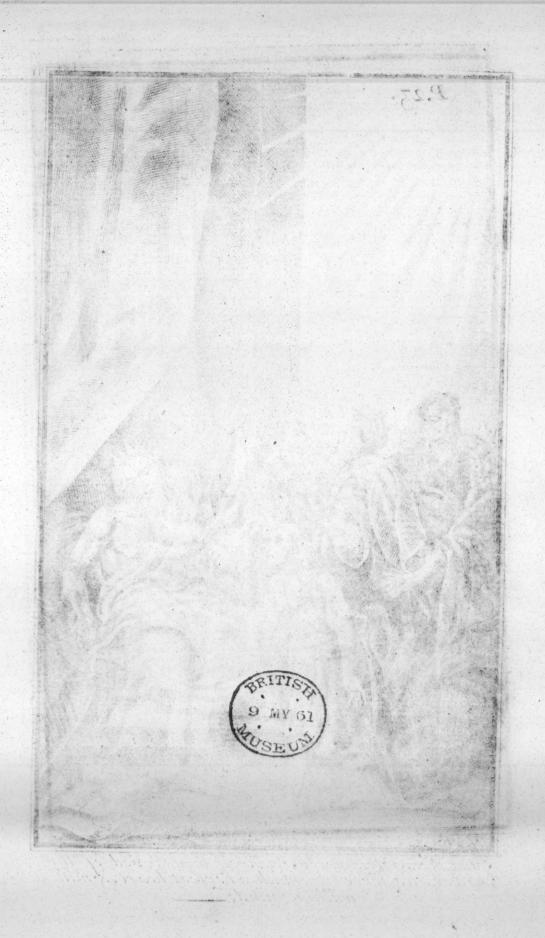
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And he took them up in his Arms puthis hands upon them & blefsed them. Mack: 10.15.



## THOUGHTS

UPON

## Christian Education.



F the principles of the Christian religion were well rooted in the hearts of all mankind, what excellent fruit would they produce! The earth would put on another face, bearing

fome refemblance of heaven itself: Idolatry, with all forts of wickedness and vice, would be every where discountenanc'd and suppress'd; for all would worship the one living and true God, and him only: There would be no more wars, nor rumours of wars: Kingdom would not rise against kingdom, nor nation against nation; but all princes would be at peace with their neighbours, and their subjects at unity among themselves, striving about nothing but which should serve God best, and do most good in the world. Then piety, and justice, and charity, would revive and flourish again

all the world over, and particularly in the church and kingdom to which we belong: Then the prayers would be read twice a day in every parish, as the law requires, and all people would heartily join together in offering them up to the Almighty Creator of the world: Then all that are of riper years would, at least every Lord's day, celebrate the memory of the death of Christ, by which their fins are expiated, and the most high God reconciled to them, and become their God and Father. And as all forts of people would thus continually worship God in his own house, so wheresoever they are, they would do all they could to ferve and honour him; whether they eat or drink, or what soever they do, they would do all to his glo-And as for their fellow-fervants, they would all love as brethren, and every one feek another's good as well as their own: What seever they would that men should do to them, they would do the same to all other men. In short, all would then deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live foberly, righteoufly, and godlily in this present world, and fo walk hand in hand together in the narrow way that leads to everlasting life. This would be the happy state of all mankind, if they were but well-grounded in that religion which the eternal Son of God hath planted upon earth.

But not to speak of other people, we of this nation rarely find any such effect of this religion among ourselves, tho' it be as generally profess'd, and as clearly taught among us, as ever it was in any nation; there are but sew

that are ever the better for it, the most being here also as bad both in their principles and practices, as they which live in the darkest corners of the earth, where the light of the Gospel never yet shin'd: Tho' the kingdom in general be Christian, there are many Heathens in it, people that were never christen'd; many that were once christen'd, and are now turn'd Heathens again, living as without God in the world: many that would still be thought Christians, and yet have apostatis'd so far as to lay aside both the sacraments which Christ ordained, and every thing elfe that can prove them to be so: many that privily bring in damnable herefies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and fo bring upon themselves swift destruction: many that follow their pernicious ways, by reason of whom the way of truth is evil spoken of, and through covetousness, with feigned works, make merchandize of men, as St. Peter foretold, 2 Pet. ii. 1, 2, 3. Many who will not endure found doctrine, but after their own lusts heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and so fulfil the prophecy of St. Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 3. And of those who still continue in the communion of the church, and in the outward profession of the true Christian faith, There are many who altho' they profess to know God, yet in works they deny him, being abominable and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate, Tit. i. 16. Many, did I fay? I wish I could not fay almost all: but, alas! it is too plain to be deny'd.

For, of that vast company of people that are called Christians in this kingdom, how few are there that live as becometh the Gospel of Christ? that finish the work which God hath given them to do, even glorify him in the world? How many that refuse or neglect to worship and ferve him upon his own day? How few that do it upon any other day, when they have any thing else to do? How many that never receiv'd the facrament of the Lord's supper in their whole lives? How few that receive it above two or three times in the year, how often foever they are invited to it? How many are the proud, the passionate, the covetous, the intemperate, the incontinent, the unjust, the prophane, and impious, in comparison of the humble, and meek, and liberal, and fober, and modest, and righteous, and holy among us? The disproportion is so vastly great, that none but God himself can make the comparison: So little of Christianity is now to be found amongst Christians themselves; to our shame be it spoken.

It is, indeed, a matter of so much shame as well as grief, to all that have any regard for the honour of Christ their Saviour, that they cannot but be very solicitous to know how it comes to pass, that his doctrine and precepts are so generally slighted and neglected as they ore in our days? And how they may be observed better for the future than now they are? Both which questions may be easily resolv'd; for we cannot wonder, that of the many which profess the Christian religion, there are so few that live up to it, when we consider how sew

are duly instructed in the first principles of it.

The religion which Christ hath reveal'd to the world, is, by his grace and bleffing, fettl'd and establish'd among us, so as to be made the religion of the kingdom in general: and therefore all that are born in it, are, or ought to be, according to his order or institution, soon after baptiz'd, and so made his disciples, or christians by profession. And the church takes security of those who thus bring a child to be baptiz'd, that when it comes to be capable of it, it shall be instructed in the catechism, which fhe for that purpose hath set forth, containing all the principles of that religion into which it was baptiz'd. But notwithstanding this hath been neglected for many years, whereby it is come to pass, that the far greatest part of the people in this kingdom know little or nothing of the religion they profess, but only to profess it as the religion of the country where they live; they may perhaps be very zealous for it, as all people are for the religion in which they are born and bred, but take no care to frame their lives according to it; because they were never rightly inform'd about it; or, at least, not soon enough, before error or sin hath got possession of them, which one or other of them commonly doth before they are aware of it; for they are always as children toffed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the fleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive, Eph. iv. 4. And whatfoever fin gets dominion over

them, there it reigns and domineers in their mortal bodies; fo that they obey it in the lufts thereof, in spite of all that can be said to them out of God's own word; for they are no way edify'd by any thing they hear, in that the foundation is not first laid upon which they should build up themselves in that most holy faith that is preach'd to them. The word they hear is as feed that falls by the way fide, or upon a rock, or else among thorns, and so never comes to perfection; their hearts not being prepar'd beforehand, and rightly dispos'd for it, by having the principles of the doctrine of Christ first infus'd into them.

This therefore being the great cause of that shameful decay of the Christian religion that is so visible among us, we can never expect to fee it repair'd, unless the great duty of catechifing be reviv'd, and the laws that are made about it be strictly observ'd all the kingdom over; as most certainly they ought to be, not only as they are the laws both of the church and state under which we live, but likewise for that they are grounded upon the word of God himfelf, who expresly commands the same thing by his postle, saying, Fathers provoke not your children to wrath, but bring them up in the nurture and

admonition of the Lord.

For here, by nurture, we are to understand, as the Greek word word was fignifies, that discipline which parents ought to exercise over their children, to prevent their falling into or continuing in any wicked courfe. And by the admonition of the Lord, is meant the catechifing,

or putting them in mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of what he would have them believe and do, that they may be sav'd. For the original word Nederia, which we translate admonition, properly signifies catechising, [Kalmizen rubilar, Hespich.] And therefore to catechise or instruct children in the knowledge of God and our Lord Jesus Christ, is a duty here laid upon all parents by Almighty God himself; and all that neglect to educate or bring up their children in the admonition of the Lord, by catechising or teaching them the principles of his religion, they all live in the breach of a plain law, a law made by the supreme Law-giver of the world, and must accordingly answer for it

at the last day.

Wherefore all that are fenfible of the great account which they must give of all their actions, at that time, to the judge of the whole world, cannot but make as much conscience of this as of any duty whatfoever, fo as to use the utmost of their care and diligence, that their children may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and fo be wife unto falvation. Neither is this any hard matter for those to do, who live in the communion of the church, having fuch a catechism or summary of the Christian religion drawn up to their hands, which is easy both for parents to teach, and for children to learn; and yet so full and comprehensive, that it contains all things necessary for any man to know in order to his being fav'd. As you may clearly see, if you do but cast your eye upon the B 4

method and contents of it; which may be all reduc'd to these five heads, the Baptismal vow, the Apostles Creed, the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, and the Doctrine of the Sacra-

ments ordain'd by our Lord Christ.

It begins where a child begins to be a christian, and therefore hath a christian name given him, even at his baptifm, wherein he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven: Which great privileges belong to all that are baptiz'd, and to none else. None else being in the number of Christ's disciples; for our Lord Christ, a little befor his ascension into heaven, left orders with his apostles, and in them with all that should suceed in the ministry of the church to the end of the world, to make all nations his disciples, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, as the original words plainly import, Matt. xxviii. 19. And therefore as people of all nations are capable of being made his disciples, so none now are, nor ever can be made so any other way, than by being baptiz'd according to his order. But they who are not thus made his disciples by being baptiz'd unto bim, are not the members of Christ; and if they be not the members of Christ, they cannot be the children of God, nor have any right to the kingdom of heaven, that being promis'd only to fuch as believe and are baptiz'd, Mark xvi. 16. And our Saviour himself elsewhere also saith, that except a man be born again of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God, John iii. 5. Whereby

by we may perceive the great necessity of this Sacrament, where it may be had, as our church observes in her office for the ministration of it,

to fuch as are of riper years.

It is to be farther observ'd, that when our Saviour ordain'd baptism to be the way or means of admitting persons into his church, or the congregation of his disciples, lest we should think, as fome have done, that he meant it only of those who are of riper years, he used the most general terms that could be invented, requiring that all nations should be baptiz'd; and if all nations, then children also, which are a great, if not the greatest part of every nation. And accordingly his church hath always baptiz'd children as well as adult persons. any, who were come to years of discretion, were willing and defirous to become Christ's difciples, that they might learn of him the way to heaven, they were made so by being baptiz'd; and if they had children, they were also baptiz'd at the same time with their parents; and so were the children which were afterwards born to them, they also were baptiz'd soon after they were born. And that it is our Saviour's pleasure that children also should be brought into his church, appears likewise in that, when his disciples rebuked those who brought children to him, he was much displeas'd, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven, Mark x. 4.

But seeing they who are thus baptiz'd, according to the institution of Christ, are thereby made his disciples, and in him the children of God,

it is necessary they should then promise to believe; and live from that time forward according as he hath commanded; which promise therefore all that are grown up always used to make, every one in his own person; and for that purpose were, and ought to be, catechiz'd before-hand. and put in mind of what they were to promife when they were baptiz'd; and therefore were call'd Catechumens. But children not being capable of making any fuch promise themselves in their own persons, they were always admitted and requir'd to do it by their guardians, that is, by their godfathers and godmothers, which brought and offer'd them to be baptiz'd; and are therefore oblig'd to take care that they afterwards be catechiz'd, or instructed in the principles of that religion into which they were admitted, and put in mind of the promise which they then made of framing their lives according to it.

This promise therefore, which children make at their baptism by their sureties, and which is imply'd in the very nature of the sacrament, whether they have any sureties or no, consists

of three general heads.

First, That they will renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the sless.

Secondly, That they will believe all the arti-

cles of the Christian faith.

Thirdly, That they will keep God's holy will and commandments, and walk in the same all the days of their life.

Which three things, under which the whole fubstance of the christian religion is contain'd,

being

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being all promised by children when they are baptiz'd into it, it is absolutely necessary that they afterwards be put in mind, so soon as they are capable, of the promise which they then made, and of the obligation which lies upon them to perform it: For otherwise it can never be expected that they should either do or so much as know it; whereas the instructing them in this, the first part of the Catechism, will prepare and dispose them for the understanding all the rest.

Particularly the Apostles creed, which is next taught them, containing all those articles of the christian faith, which they promised to believe, and nothing else; nothing but what is grounded upon plain texts of scripture, and hath been always believ'd by the whole catholick church, in all ages and places all the world over: Here are none of those private opinions and controverted points, which have fo long diffurb'd the church, and ferve only to perplex mens minds, and take them off from the more substantial and necessary duties of religion, as we have found by woful experience; which our church hath taken all possible care to prevent, by inferting no other articles of faith into the Catechism which her members are to learn, that what are contain'd in this Creed, receiv'd and approv'd of by the whole christian world; and then acquainting them what they chiefly learn in it, even to believe in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, in whose name they were christen'd, and therefore must continue in this faith, or cease to be Christians.

The other thing which they who are baptiz'd promise, is, That they will keep God's commandments, which therefore are next taught in the Catechism, without any mixture of human inventions or constitutions: Those ten commandments, which the supreme law-giver himself proclaim'd upon mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own singer upon two tables of stone. These they are all bound to learn, because they are bound to keep them all, as they will answer it at the last day, when all mankind shall be

judg'd by them.

But no man can keep these commandments without God's special grace, which we have no ground to expect, without praying to him for it; and therefore children are in the next place taught how to pray, according to that form which Christ himself compos'd, and commanded us to fay, whenfoever we pray, Luke xi. 2. And as he who believes all that is in the Apoftle's creed, believes all that he need believe; and he that keeps all the ten commandments, doth all that he need to do; fo he that prays this prayer aright, prays for all things which he can have need of: So that in this short Catechism, which children of five years old may learn, they are taught all that is needful for them either to believe, or do, or pray for.

The last part of the Catechism is concerning the two sacraments which Christ hath ordain'd in his church, as generally necessary to salvation; that is to say, Baptism, and the Lord's supper; both which our church hath there explain'd with such extraordinary prudence and caution, as to take in all that is necessary to be known of either of them, without touching upon any of the disputes that have been raised about them, to the great prejudice of the christian

religion.

Seeing therefore this Catechism is so full, that it contains all that any man needs to know; and yet so short, that a child may learn it, I do not see how parents can bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, better than by instructing them in it: I do not say, by teaching them only to say it by rote, but by instructing them in it, so as that they may understand, as soon and as far as they are capable, the true sense and meaning of all the words and phrases in every part of it; for which purpose it will be necessary to observe these rules.

First, You must begin betime, before your children have got any ill habits, which may be eafily prevented, but are not so eafily cur'd. When children are baptiz'd, being born again of water, and of the Spirit, as the guilt of their original fin is washed away in the laver of regeneration, so that it will never be imputed to them, unless it. break forth afterwards into actual transgressions; fo they receive also the Spirit of God, to prevent all fuch eruptions, by enabling them to refift the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; to believe and ferve God according as they then promis'd; fo far, at least, that fin shall not have dominion over them, that they should obey it in the lusts thereof, seeing now they are not under the law, but under the grace of Christ, Rom. vi. 12. 14. But that the feeds of grace which were

then fown in their hearts, may not be loft, or stifled, but grow up to perfection, great care must be taken that they may be taught, so soon as they are capable to discern between good and evil, to avoid the evil and do the good, and to believe and live as they promifed, when they were endued with grace to do it. Hast thou children? faith the fon of Sirach, Instruct them, and bow down their neck from their youth, Eccl. vii. 23. Give thy son no liberty in his youth, and wink not at his follies. Bow down his neck while be is young, and beat him on the fides while he is a child, lest he wax stubborn and be disobedient unto thee, and so bring sorrow to thine heart, cap. xxx. 11, 12. Whereas be that gathereth instruction from his youth, shall find wisdom 'till his old age, cap. vi. 18. According to that of the wife man: Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it, Prov. xxii. 6. As Timothy from a child had known the boly scriptures, 2 Tim. iii. 15. And that was the reason that he was so expert in them when he became a man: which therefore that your children may also be, the first thing they learn must be their catechism, where they are taught all the great truths and duties that are reveal'd in holy scripture, as necessary to salvation.

But how can fuch parents do this, that cannot read, nor fay the Catechism themselves? This, I fear, is the case of too many among us: there are many who having not been taught to read when they were young, neglect or think scorn to learn it afterwards, and so lose all the benefit and comfort which they might receive by reading of the

holy

holy scriptures: but this, I confess, is not so neceffary, especially in our Church, where the holy scriptures are so constantly read in publick; that if people would as constantly come and hearken to them, they might be wife unto salvation, altho' they cannot read; as few heretofore could, at least in the primitive times, when not with standing they attained to the knowledge of God, and of their duty to him, as well as if they had been the greatest scholars in the world. But then confidering that they could not read, they fupply'd that defect by attending more diligent to what they heard out of God's holy word, and laying it up in their hearts; so that they understood all the principles of the Christian religion, and were able to instruct their children in the same, as well as if they could read. But this is not our case; for now there are many who can neither read nor fo much as fay the Catechism, having never learned it themselves, and therefore cannot posfibly teach it their children: fuch as the apostle speaks of, who when, for the time, they ought to be teachers, they have need that one teach them again, which be the first principles of the Oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat, Heb. v. 12. And what must such do? They certainly, as they tender their own good, must be doubly diligent in the use of all means that may tend to their edification and instruction: and as they defire the good of their children, they must send them to school, or provide some other person to teach them; which if the parents neglect to do, the godfathers and godmothers of every child should put them in mind mind of it, and see that the child be taught, so soon as he is able to learn, what a solemn vow, promise, and profession he made by them at his baptism. And that he may know these things the better, they must call upon him to hear sermons; and chiefly they must provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health, as they are contain'd in the Church Catechism, and then to bring

him to the Bishop to be confirmed by him.

But for that purpose, when children have been taught the Catechism, they must be sent to the minister or curate of the parish where they live, that he may examine and instruct them in it: examine whether they can fay it, and instruct them fo as to make them understand it. For tho' the words be all as plain as they can be well made, yet the things fignified by those words are many of them so high, that it cannot be expected that children should reach and apprehend them without help: which therefore they must go to their minister for, whose duty and office it is to acquaint them with the full fense and meaning of every word, what is fignified by it, and what ground they have to believe it is God's holy word. But to do this to any purpose, requires more time than is commonly allow'd for it in our days: and that is one great reason there are so few among us that are built up, as they ought to be, in their most boly faith. Many refuse or neglect to send their children to be catechifed at all; and they who fend them, fend them so little, and for so little

little, and for so little a time, that it is morally impossible they should be much the better for it: As many have found by experience, who, altho' in their childhood they were taught the catechism, and could say it readily, yet having not been sufficiently instructed in it, they afterwards forgot it again, and knew no more than as if they had never learnt it. I wish this be not the case of too many parents: wherefore, that this great work may be done effectually, fo as to anfwer its end; as children should begin as soon as ever they are able to learn the catechism, and go on by degrees till they can fay it perfectly by heart; fo, when they can do that, they are still to continue to be instructed in it all along, till they understand it all so well, as to be fit to receive the facrament of the Lord's supper, which usually may be about fixteen or feventeen years of age, more or less according to their feveral capacities. By this means, as they grow in years, they would grow also in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18. This likewise would be a great encouragement to the minister to take pains with them, when they are fuch as can understand what he saith to them, and will continue under his care and conduct till they are fettled and grounded in the faith, and have their fenses exercised to discern between good and evil; and so shall be every way qualify'd to ferve God, and do their duty to him in that state of life, to which he shall be pleased afterwards to call them, upon earth, and then to go to heaven.

If this could once be brought about throughout the kingdom, that all children that are born and bred up in it, were thus fully instructed in the knowledge of Christ, and of the religion which he hath revealed to the world, till they are fit for the holy communion, and ready to engage in the affairs of the world, the next generation would be much better than this, and christianity would then begin to flourish again, and appear in its native beauty and lustre. And verily, whatfoever fome may think, fuch especially as were never catechifed themselves, this is as great and necessary a duty as any that is requir'd in all the bible: For God himself by his apostle, expresly commands all parents to bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; that is, as I have shew'd to catechife or instruct them in the principles of the doctrine of our Lord Christ. And therefore they who do it not, live in the breach of a known law, yea, of many laws; there being many places in God's holy word, where the fame thing is commanded in other terms by Almighty God himself, saying, These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thy heart, and thou shalt teach them diligently thy children, Deut. vi. 7. And again, Therefore shall you lay up these words in your heart, and in your soul, and bind them for a fign upon your hand, that they may be as frontlets between your eyes, and ye shall teach them your children, chap. xi. 18, 19. So also ch. iv. 10. This is that which he commands also by the wife man, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is The word in the original, which we translate train up, signifies also to dedicate or devote a child to the service of God, by instructing him how to do it, and exercising him continually in it, and therefore in the margin of our bibles, it is translated catechise a child: So that we have here both the necessity and usefulness of this duty: The necessity, in that it is commanded to train up, or catechise a child in the ways of God: And the usefulness, in that what a child is thus taught will remain with him all

his life long.

Seeing therefore that God hath laid fo strict a command upon all parents, to bring up their children in the knowledge of himself, and of their duty to him, they can expect no other, but that he should take particular notice whether they do it or not, and reward or punish them accordingly. As we see in Abraham, what a special kindness had God for him upon this account? Shall I hide from him, faith the Lord, that thing which I do? Seeing that Abrabam shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations upon earth shall be bleffed in him. But why had he fuch an extraordinary favour for Abraham above all other men? God himself gives us the reason of it, saying; For I know that he will command his children and his houshold after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, Gen. xviii. 19. This was the reason that Abraham was so much in favour, that he was call'd the friend of God, Jam. 11. 23.

And how much God is displeas'd with parents neglecting to bring up their children in his true faith and fear, and fuffering them to grow up and go on in a course of vice and prophaneness, appears sufficiently from that severe judgment which he inflicted upon Eli and his whole house for it, saying to Samuel, For I have told him, even Eli, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he re-Brained them not. And therefore I have sworn to the house of Eli, That the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever, 1 Sam. iii. 13, 14. The execution of which dreadful judgment is left upon record in the holy scriptures, as a standing monument and caution to all parents, to take heed how they educate their children.

Be fure the servants of God in all ages have taken as much care to bring up their children well, as to live well themselves; making as much conscience of this, as of any duty what-soever which they owe to God: That the children which he hath given them, may answer his end in giving them; that they may not be insignificant cyphers in the world, or as fruitless trees that serve only to cumber the ground, but that they may serve and glorify God whilst they are upon earth, so as to be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in

light.

And verily all parents would make this their continual care and study, if they minded either their own or their children's good. Many com-

complain, not without cause, that their children are disobedient and undutiful to them; but the cause is chiefly in themselves: When they have neglected their duty to their children, how can they expect their children should perform their duty to them? They were never taught it, how then can they do it? If therefore they prove stubborn and obstinate, if they give themselves up to all manner of vice and wickedness, if instead of a comfort they be a grief and trouble to their parents, their parents must blame themselves for it: And when they come to reflect upon it, their fin in neglecting their duty to God and their children in their education, will be a greater trouble to them than any their children can give them. Whereas, when parents bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, if their children notwithstanding happen to miscarry afterwards, they have this to comfort them, that they did their duty, and have nothing to anfwer for upon that account.

But what a mighty advantage would it be to the children themselves, to be thus continually put in mind of their baptismal vow, the articles of their faith, the duties of religion, and what else is contained in the catechism, from their childhood all along till they come to be men or women? Their minds would be then sill'd with such divine truths, and with so great a sense of their duty, that there would be no room left for heresy or sin to enter, at least not so as to get possession and exercise any dominion there. The first impressions that are made

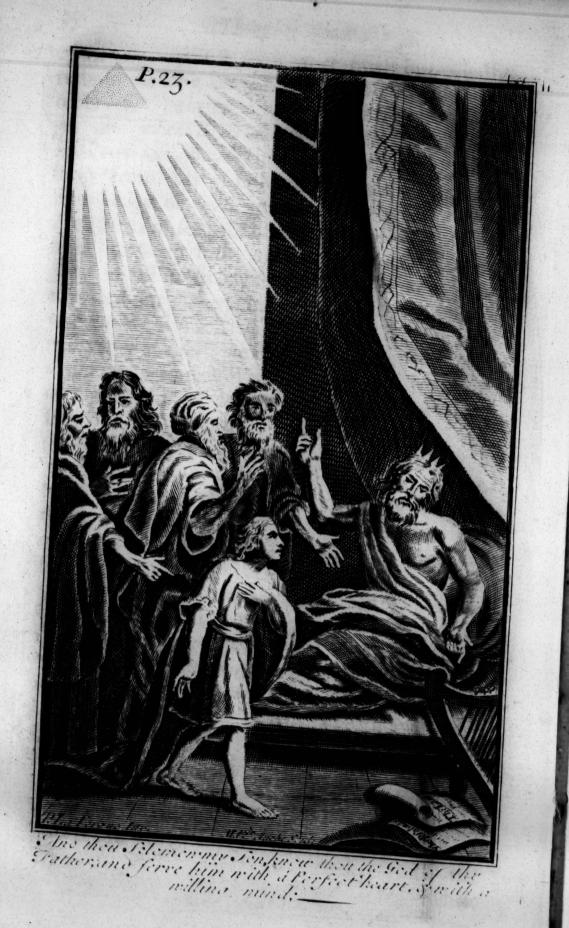
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upon us, are not foon worn out, but usually remain as long as we live. As the wife man observes, Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it, Prov. xxii. 6. When one hath been all along from his childhood brought up in the knowledge of God and his holy will, it will stick by him so as to be a constant check upon him, to keep him within the compass of his duty in all ordinary cases; and if any thing extraordinary happens to draw him afide, it will make him restless and uneasy, till he hath recover'd himself, and got into the right way again; and so it will either keep him innocent, or make him penitent. In short, by the blesfing of God attending, as it usually doth, this great duty, when it is conscientiously perform'd, is the best means that parents can use, whereby to breed up their children for heaven, to make them fellow-citizens with the faints, and of the houshold of God, both in this world and for ever.

Wherefore, if we have any regard either to our own, or to our childrens eternal welfare, let us fet upon this duty in good earnest; let us bring up our children so long in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, till they fully know him, and all that he would have them believe and do, that they may be sav'd: But we must be sure to teach them by our example as well as instructions; we must not tell them one thing and do another our selves; but shew them how to keep the faith and laws of God, by keeping them ourselves before their eyes, all the while





while we live together upon earth: that when we are all got, one after another, out of this troublesome and naughty world, we and our children may at last meet together in heaven, and there praise and glorify Almighty God, we for them, and they for us, and all for his grace and truth in Jesus Christ our Lord.

After this general instruction in the principles of our holy religion, it will be necessary, as soon as our young Christian is capable of it, to inform him more particularly in the nature of God, and the great mystery of the Trinity, into which we are all baptiz'd; which therefore shall be my next subject.

## THOUGHTS

UPON THE

## Knowledge of GOD.

HOUGH religion in general be a thing that all men naturally agree in, yet there is nothing, I think, that men differ so much about, as about the particular acts and exercise of it:

for all nations in the world have some religion; but there is scarce two amongst them all that have the same; yea, in one and the same nation too there are divers modes of religion professed and practised. No nation or country in the world but will afford us instances of this;

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and our own, I think, as many as any other whatsoever: for could we but cast our eyes into the several corners of this land, at this very moment, what variety might we observe in these acts which the feveral parties among us account to be religious! Some we should see fitting silently for a while together, without either speaking, or hearing of a word spoken, until at length up starts a man or a woman, and entertains them with a discourse made up of cenfures and malice, blasphemy and nonsense; and this is all the religion they pretend to. Others we do find crowded together in feveral corners, fometimes praying, fometimes discoursing, as it were, fometimes arguing the case with Almighty God, and acquainting him with what happens in the world, and that with as much confidence and malapertness, as if he was their fellow-creature; and then very gravely walk home, and please themselves with a vain conceit, that they are more religious than their neighbours. Another fort of people there are amongst us, who are as superstitious as the former were flovenly and irreverent in their devotions: for these having been sprinkled with a little holy water, and perform'd their obeifance to a crucifix or picture, presently fall a pattering over Ave Maria's and Pater Noster's to themselves, as fast as they can, whilst the priest, in the mean while, fays something too; but the people generally know not what it is, nor indeed what themselves say, it being all in an unknown tongue. But howfoever, tho' they know not what they fay, they think

think that God doth, and therefore fatisfy themfelves, that they have faid fomething, tho' they know not what, and think that God is well pleased with what they have done, because themselves are so.

Others there are, and by the bleffing of God, far more than all the rest, in this nation, who present themselves before their great Creator and Possessor of the world in that solemn and reverent manner as the constitutions of our Church direct, humbly confessing their manifold sins against God, begging mercy and pardon from him, imploring his savour, and praising his name for all the expressions of his undeserv'd love to mankind: and all this in our vulgar tongue, that we all understand; and so

perform a reasonable service unto God.

And, verily, if we confider the institution it felf of that religious worship which we thus perform, it is certainly the best that ever was prefcrib'd by any Church, as being most consonant to the general rules of devotion laid down in scripture, as also most conformable to the discipline and practice of the primitive church. But we must not think that we serve God aright, because we be present with them that do so. I do not doubt but that there are many amongst us, who fincerely endeavour to worship God, whensoever they present themselves before him in publick. I wish that all of us would do so. But we must still remember, that we should serve the Lord elsewhere as well as at church, and on all other days as well as upon the Lord's day: and that if we would be truly religious, our whole man must

be devoted to the service of God, yea, and our whole time too. We must not think that it is enough to do fomething, but we must do all things that are requir'd of us, which notwithstanding we can never do, unless we know both that GOD whom we ought to serve, and that service which we ought to perform unto him. And therefore David directs his fon to the right and only way to true religion, faying, I Chr. xxviii. 9. And thou, Solomon, my fon, know thou the God of thy father, and ferve him with a perfect heart and with a willing mind: which words, did we apply them to our felves, would, by the bleffing of God, put us upon fincere endeavours after real and universal obedience to all the commands of God: and persuade us not to content our felves with vain pretences to and professions of religion, as most do; but strive to live up unto our profession, and carry and behave our felves fo as becometh those who defire to be religious, and to serve God in good earnest. Which that we may do, let us observe the rule and method which David here prescribes to his fon: first to know God, and then to serve bim with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

I shall not trouble the reader with any critical division of the words, for they naturally divide

themselves into two parts.

First, that we should know, and then that we should serve God with a perfect heart, and with a

willing mind.

I shall begin with the first, not only because it is first plac'd, but because it necessary must precede the second; it being impossible for us to serve God aright, unless we know him: for without this

this, all our service will be but like the altar which the Athenians dedicated to a yriosa Orio, to the unknown God. By which inscription they manifested to the world, that they knew that they ought to serve some God, but that they knew not that God whom they ought to serve. But that we may so know him as to serve him aright, I shall first shew what it is of God which we must know, in order to our serving him aright.

First, Therefore, he that would serve God aright, must believe and know that he is, Heb. ix. 6. that is, that there is fuch a supreme and all-glorious being in and over the world, that we call God, that made, preserves, governs, and disposes of every thing in the world, as seemeth best to him: And that it is not only probable that there is fuch a one, but that it is the most certain and necessary truth in the world; without which, there would be no fuch thing as truth or certainty. For, indeed, if God was not, nothing could be; he alone being the basis and foundation of all being in the world, yea, and of all motion too, Acts xvii. 28. therefore every thing that lives, every thing that moves, nay, every thing that is, argues God to be; which therefore is the first great truth, upon which all the rest depend; without which nothing would be true, much less would our fervices be fo: fo that the first thing to be done, in order to our ferving God, is to know and believe that he is, and that he ought to be ferv'd and ador'd by us.

Secondly, It is necessary to know his essence too, as well as his existence; what, as well as

that he is; what he is in himself, and what he is to us; that in himself he is what he is, in and of himself, the source of all wisdom, the abyss of all power, the ocean of all goodness, the fountain of all happiness, the principle of all motion, and the centre, yea, perfection of all perfections in the world; whose nature or essence is so pure, so glorious, so immense, so infinite, so eternal, so every way perfect, transcendent, and incomprehensible, that the more we think of him, the more we contemplate upon him, the more we praise and admire him, the more we may. And the highest apprehenfions that we can have of him, is still to apprehend him infinitely higher than all our apprehensions of him. And therefore that man best knows God, that knows him to be beyond his knowledge, and that knows he can never know him enough.

But we must know too what he is to us, even the author and giver of every good thing we have, and who in himself is whatsoever we can desire to make us happy: and therefore it is, that in the covenant of grace, when he would assure us that we shall have all things that we can enjoy, he only promises to be our God, Heb. viii. 10. which is as much as we can desire, and indeed as himself can promise; for in promising himself, he hath promised whatsoever he is, whatsoever he hath, whatsoever he doth, nay,

whatfoever he can do as God.

And thus are we to look upon God as the only object of all true happiness, and the only centre wherein all the desires and inclinations of our fouls can rest.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, It is necessary also to know the several attributes and perfections which he hath revealed of himself in scripture; that he is so wife, as to know whatfoever can be known; so powerful, as to do whatsoever can be done; so great, and glorious in himself, that we have all just cause to fear him; so kind and gracious in his Son, that it is our duty also to trust in him; fo true, that what foever he faith, is true, because he saith it; so good, that what soever he doth is good because he doth it, so just, as to punish every fin that is committed, and yet so merciful, as to pardon every finner that repenteth; that he is pure without mixture, infinite without bounds, eternal without beginning, everlasting without end, and every way perfect, without comparison.

Fourthly, We must know also the works of God, what he hath done, wherein he hath manifested himself to us. But what hath God done? Or, rather, what hath he not done? It was he that raifed this stately fabrick of the world we live in out of the womb of nothing. It was he that extracted light out of darkness, beauty and perfection out of a confused chaos. It was he that bedeck'd the glorious canopy of heaven with those glistering spangles the stars. It was he that commanded the fun to run his course by day, and the moon to ride her circuit by night about the world, to shew the inhabitants thereof the glory of their all-glorious Maker. It was he that hung the earth upon nothing, and spread upon the surface of it a curious carpet, embroider'd with all manner, not of painted but real flowers, and plants, and

out of nothing; and it is he that still preserves all things in their being. It is he that orders the affairs of kingdoms, manageth the intrigues of state, directeth the events of wars, and disposes of every particular person as himself sees good. In a word, whatsoever was ever made in heaven above, or on earth beneath, it was he that made it; and whatsoever is still done in heaven above, or on earth beneath, it is he that doth it; so that nothing ever was, or is, or ever will be, or can be done, but what is done by him, as the first

and universal cause of all things.

Fifthly, It is necessary also to know so as to believe, that tho' there is but one God, yet there are three persons; all and every one of which is that one God. I do not fay it is necessary to understand or comprehend this mystery, that we cannot do; but we are not therefore the less to believe it, because we cannot understand it: for there are many other things in divinity; yea, many things in natural philosophy, and in geometry it felf, which we cannot understand, and yet, for all that, both know and believe them to be true. But how much more cause have we to believe this, which God himfelf hath afferted of himfelf! nay, and befides that, we have the fame obligations to ferve and honour every person, as we have to serve and honour any one person in the sacred trinity, our Saviour himself having expresly told us, That all men should bonour the Son even as they bonour the Father, John v. 23. But that we cannot do, unless we believe the Son to be God as well

as the Father; and, by consequence, unless we acknowledge this fundamental article of our christian faith, into which we were all baptiz'd.

Secondly, We must consider what kind of knowledge we ought to have of God, in refe-

rence unto our ferving him aright.

For we must not think that it is enough to know in general that there is a God, and that he is wife, and powerful, great and glorious, true and faithful, good and gracious; these things a man may know in general, fo as to be able to discourse of them, and dispute for them too, and yet come short of that knowledge, which is requisite to our true serving of God: which should be fuch a knowledge as will not only fwim in the brain, but fink down into the heart; whereby a man is possessed with a due sense of those things he knows, so that he doth not only know, but in a manner feel them to be fo. Thus David, who, in the text, calls upon his fon to know the God of his fathers, intimates elsewhere, what knowledge he means, faying, ob tafte and fee that the Lord is good, Pfal. xxxiv. 8. where we may observe, how he requires our spiritual fenses to be employed in our knowledge of God. so as to see that he is good, yea, and taste it too, that is, feel and experience it in our felves; which tho' it may feem a paradox to many of us, yet there is none of us but may find it to be a real truth, and attain unto it, if we be but careful and constant in our meditations upon God, and fincere in performing our devotions to him; for, by these means, our notions of God will be refined, our conceptions clear'd, and our affections. fections, by consequence, so mov'd towards him, that we shall taste and experience in our selves, as well as know from others, that he is good, and

that all perfections are concenter'd in him.

But this practical and experimental knowledge of God, doth necessarily presuppose the other, or the general knowledge of him, fo as to be acquainted with the feveral expressions which God in scripture hath made use of, whereby to reveal himself and his perfections to us; as when he is pleased to call himself the Almighty God, the all-wife and infinite, the just and gracious God, and the like; or to fay of himself, I am that I am; that is, in and of my felf eternal. Unless we first know that these and fuch like expressions belong to God, and what is the true meaning and purport of them, it is impossible for us to arrive at that knowledge of him, which is necessary to our ferving him aright.

And so I come to the last thing to be consider'd here concerning the knowledge of God, even that it is necessary to our serving him; so that none can serve him that does not first know him, and therefore that the method as well as matter of David's advice is here observable, Know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him; or, first know him, and then serve him with a perfect

heart and a willing mind.

And, verily, one would think that this is a truth fo clear, so evident of it self, that it needs no proof or demonstration; for how is it possible for us to know how to serve God, unless we first know that God whom we ought to serve? for

all our services unto God should be both proper to his nature and suitable to his perfections; and therefore, unless I first know his nature and perfections, how can I adjust my services to them? as for example, I am to fear his greatness, and trust on his mercy, and rejoyce in his goodness, and desire his favour: but how can I do this, unless I know that he is thus great and merciful,

good and favourable?

Moreover, as a man cannot ferve God when he hath a mind to do it, fo neither will he have a mind or heart to ferve him unless he first knows him: for the motions of the will are always regulated by the ultimate dictates of the practical understanding; so that a man chuses or refuses, loves or hates, defires or abhors, according as he knows any object that is presented to him to be good or evil: and therefore how can I chuse God as my chiefest good, unless I first know him to be so; or love him as I ought, above all things, unless I first know him to be better than all things; or perform any true service to him, unless I first know him to be such a one, as deserves to have true service performed unto him?

Nay, lastly, nothing that we do can be accepted as a service to God, unless it be both grounded upon, and directed by a right know-ledge of him. God would not accept of blind sacrifices under the Law, much less will he accept of blind services now under the Gospel; and therefore he expects and requires now, that what-soever we do, either to or for him, be a reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. That

our fouls as well as bodies, yea, and the rational as well as fensitive part, be employed in all the services which we perform to him; which certainly cannot be, unless we first know him: so that there is an indispensable connection betwixt our knowing and serving God; it being as impossible for any man to serve him, that doth not first know him, as it is to know him aright, and not to serve him.

But however indispensable this connection be in its own nature, the church of Rome can make a shift to dispense with it; yea, so far as to affert, that Ignorance is the mother of devotion. But you must excuse them, for they do not mean by devotion as we do, the real ferving of God, but only the performing of some outward services to him. And fuch a kind of devotion, I confess, ignorance may be the mother of: but a man must be grosly ignorant that thinks this to be devotion, which is but a piece of pageantry, a mocking instead of serving God. And, for my part, I cannot but tremble to think what a difmal, what a dreadful account the heads of that church must hereafter give, for daring to keep the people in so much ignorance as they do; so as to render them uncapable of ferving God, that fo they may be the more ready to ferve the church; that is, the interests and designs of the court of Rome.

But let them look to that, whilst we, in the mean while, study to know God before all things else; considering,

First, God therefore made us that we might know him, and that we might know that he made

against

made us. And therefore it is that he hath made rational creatures capable of reflecting upon him that made us so: neither did he only make us at first, but he still perserves us; we feed daily at his table, and live upon his bounty. And the very beasts, that any of us keep, know those that keep them; and shall we be more brutish than brutes themselves, and not know him that keeps and maintains us? O how justly may God then call beaven and earth to witness against us, as he did once against his people Israel! Isa. i.

Secondly, There is none of us but have attain'd to knowledge in other things: some of us have searched into arts and sciences, others are acquainted with several languages; none of us but are, or would be expert in the affairs of this world, and understand the mysteries of our several trades and callings: what, and shall he alone, by whom we know other things, be himself unknown to us? what is, if this be not, a just cause wherefore God should infatuate and deprive us of all our knowledge in other things, seeing we labour more to know them, than him from whom we receive our knowledge?

Thirdly, Ignorance of God is it felf one of the greatest sins that we can be guilty of, and which God is most angry for, Hos. iv. 4. And there God himself imputes the destruction of his people to the want of knowledge, v. 6. Nay, and it is that sin too that makes way for all the rest: for what is the reason that many so frequently blaspheme God's name, slight his service, transgress his laws, and incense his wrath

against them, but meerly because they do not know him, how great, how glorious, how terrible a God he is? for did they but thus rightly know him, they could not but regard the thoughts of doing any thing that is offensive to him: and therefore the true knowledge of God would be the best security and the most sovereign antidote in the world against the infection of fin, and the prevalency of temptations over us; neither would it only preserve us from sin, but put us upon duty and service, and direct us also in the performance of it. Infomuch, that the hardest duty will be easy to one that knows God; the eafiest will be hard to one that knows him not: hard, did I fay? yea, and impossible too; for altho' a man may know God, and yet not ferve him, it is impossible that any man should serve God unless he knows him; knowledge it felf being both the first duty that we owe to God, and the foundation of all the rest.

And therefore, to conclude, if any defire to perform the vow they made in their baptism, to love and fear, to honour and obey the eternal God that made them: if any defire to be Christians indeed, and holy in all manner of conversation: If any defire to trust on his promises, and observe the precepts of the great Creator and Possessor the world, to live above the snares of death, and to antedate the joys of heaven: if any defire to live the life and to die the death of the righteous, to serve God here, so as to enjoy him hereafter; let all such but study the scriptures, and frequent the publick ordinances; be constant and sincere in prayer and meditation, neglecting

neglecting no opportunity of acquainting themfelves with God, but make use of all means possible to get their hearts posses'd with a reverential apprehension of God's greatness and glory, and with a due sense of his goodness and perfections, and their work will soon be done; for if they thus know God, they will serve him too

with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

We have feen how we ought to know God, we are now to confider how we ought to ferve him; without which, indeed, our knowledge of him will avail us nothing. For, as the Apostle argues, tho' I speak with tongues of men and angels, and have not charity, I am become as founding brass, and a tinkling cymbal, I Cor. xiii. 12. so here, tho' we should have the highest notions and speculations in divinity that men or angels ever had, tho' we should understand the highest mysteries in religion, and dive into the profoundest secrets of Christian philosophy, though we should excell the greatest school-men and the most learned doctors that ever liv'd, and were able to baffle herefies, dispute error and schism out of the Christian church, and evince the truth of the articles of our faith by more than mathematical demonstrations; Yet, if after all this, our knowledge be only notional, not moving our affections, nor putting us upon the practice of what we know, it is but as founding brafs, and a tinkling cymbal; it may make a noise in the world, and get us applause amongst men, but it will stand us in no stead at all before the eternal God; yea, it will rife up in judgment against us another day, and fink us lower into the abyss of tor-D 3 ments

ments. And therefore, tho' men may, God doth not look upon this as the true knowledge of himfelf. Neither can any one be properly faid to know God that doth not ferve him with a perfect beart, and a willing mind. And therefore having discoursed of that knowledge which is necessary to our serving God, I shall now endeavour to shew, how we ought to serve God according to

our knowledge.

In speaking unto which, I must beg the reader's most serious and Christian attention, as to a matter which concerns our lives, yea, our eternal lives in another world: I hope there is none of those that pretends to instruct, so brutish and atheistical, as not to desire to serve God: none fo proud and felf-conceited, as to think that they ferve him well enough already, or at least know how to do it. I write only to fuch as defire to be instructed, read books of practical religion with no other defign but to ferve God, and to learn how to ferve him better. And if this be our only defign, as I hope it is, let us manifest it to the world, and to our conscience, by attending to, and fixing what we read upon our own hearts: for I may venture to fay, that this is the noblest and most necessary subject that I can write, or any one can read of, and that which, feriously weigh'd, rightly consider'd, and truly practifed, will most certainly bring us to the highest happiness which our natures are capable of, or persons were at first design'd for.

Now, for our clearer proceeding in a matter of fo great importance, we will first consider, what it is to serve God? A question very neces-

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fary to be treated of and refolv'd, because of the general mistakes that are in the world about it: many people fancying the service of God to confift in fome few particular acts; as in faying their prayers, reading the scriptures, going to church, and giving an alms now and then to the poor, especially if they be but zealous and refolute in the defence of the party or faction they are of, so as to promote it to the highest of their parts, estates, or power, then they think they do God good service, and that this is all he requires of them. Others think they serve God by ferving of his creatures, as in praying to faints, bowing to images, and falling down before the eucharist, when it is carry'd in procesfion: nay, many there are, who think they ferve God when they dishonour him, wresting his scriptures, corrupting his doctrines, opposing his vice-gerents, feducing his people and fervants in error, and all for the promoting of some temporal interests or groundless opinions. But we might know that the fervice of God is a thing of an higher nature and nobler stamp than such filly mortals would perfuade us it is: confifting in nothing less than,

or are, or do, unto the honour of the eternal God; refigning our hearts wholly to him, and subduing all our passions and affections before him. For seeing we were wholly made by him, and wholly depend upon him, if we would serve God at all, we must serve him with all we are; every faculty of our souls and members of our bodies employing themselves in those services

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which

which he hath set them, so as to live as none of our own, but as wholly God's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchased us with his own most precious blood; and therefore being thus bought with a price, we should glorify God both in our souls and bodies which are his, I Cor. vi. 20.

And as we are to ferve him with all we are, fo also with all we have. Honour the Lord with thy substance, and the first fruits of all thine increase, Prov. iii. 9. Whatsoever we have we receive from his bounty, and therefore whatfoever we have we should employ for his glory: our parts, our gifts, our estates, our power, our time; whatfoever we can call ours, is his in our hands, and therefore to be improv'd not for our felves, but him; as our faviour shews in the parable of the talents which the master of the house distributed amongst his servants, to some be gave one, to some five, to others ten, that every one might employ his proportion to his mafter's use, neither squandering it away, nor yet laying it up in a napkin. It is God that is the grand master and possessor of the world, who parcels it out amongst his creatures as himself sees good; but wherefoever he entrusteth any thing, he expects the improvement of it for himself. And so, I suppose, doth every one of us from such fervants as we keep; we expect that what we put into their hands, be laid out, not for themselves, but for us; and that they spend their time in our service, not their own: and if they do otherwife,

wise, none of us but will say, they do not serve us, but themselues. How then can we expect that God should look upon us as serving him, when we do not do so much for him as we expect from our own servants, tho' our sellow-creatures? Or how can we think that we serve him as we ought, unless we serve him as much as we can? Or that God should look upon us as his servants, unless we employ and improve whatsoever we have, not for our own pleasure, prosit, or applause, but for his honour and glory, from whom we did receive it? Let us remember our Saviour's words, Matth. v. 16. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven.

2. Hence the serving of God confisteth also in the performing of fincere and universal obedience to all his laws and commands, which is but the natural confequent of the former: for if our whole man, both foul and body, and whatfoever we have, or are, ought to be devoted to his glory, it must needs follow, that whatsoever we do, should be conformable to his precepts; which also is no more than every one of us expects from our fervants: for those whom we have covenanted with to be our fervants, and whom we keep upon that very account, that they may ferve us, we all expect that they should observe all our commands, and do whatfoever in justice and by our covenant we can enjoin them. But how much more then must we our selves be oblig'd to obey all the laws and precepts of him that made us, whose creatures we are, and whose servants, by confequence, we ought to be.

Ifay, all his laws and precepts; for we must not think to pick and chuse, to do some things, and leave other things undone: for we should take it ill, if our servants should serve us so; if when we send them upon several businesses, they should mind only one of them, and neglect all the other, we should, questionless, look upon them as very idle and careless servants: but let us consider and bethink ourselves, whether we have not served our master, the eternal God, as bad as servants have or can serve us. He hath given us several laws to observe, and hath set us several works to do, and we, perhaps, can make a shift to do something that is requir'd of us, but never think of the other, and, perhaps, the prin-

cipal things too that he expects from us.

Just as if when Moses had broke the two tables of stone, whereon the ten commandments were written, one man should have come and fnatched away one piece, a fecond run away with another piece, and a third with another, 'till at length ten several persons had gotten ten several pieces, wherein the ten commandments were feverally written; and when they had done so, every one of them should have striven to keep the law that was written in his own piece, never minding what was written in the others. Do you think that fuch persons as these are, could be reputed the servants of God, and to observe his laws, when they minded only one particular branch or piece of them? The case is our own; we hearing of feveral laws and commands which the most high God hath set us, get some one of them by the end, and run away with with that, as if we were not concern'd in any of the rest: but let us still remember, that the fame finger that wrote one of the commands. wrote all the other too. And therefore he that doth not observe all, as well as one, cannot properly be faid to observe any at all. Neither, indeed, doth he serve God in any thing; for tho' he may do fomething that God requires, yet it is plain that he doth not therefore do it, because God requires it; for if he did fo, he would do all things else too that God requires. And therefore fuch a person doth not serve God at all in what he doth; no, he serves himself rather than God, in that he doth it not in obedience to God. but with respect unto himself; as to get himself a name and credit amongst men, or perhaps to fatisfy his troublesome conscience, which would not let him be at quiet unless he did it.

But now one that would ferve God indeed, hath respect to all his commandments, Psal. cxix. 6. and walks in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless, as Zacharias and Elizabeth are said to have done, Luke i. 6. And thus, whosoever would serve the Lord in any thing, must serve him in all things that he requireth. And this is that which David means in this advice to his son, saying, know thou the God of thy fathers, and serve him; that is, observe and do whatsoever he enjoins, and that too

with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

And so I come to the fecond thing to be consider'd here; that is, the manner how we ought to serve God, even with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind,

First

First, With a perfect heart: that is, with integrity and fincerity of heart; not from any byends or finister design, but out of pure obedience to the laws of God, as he is the fovereign of heaven and earth, and, in Christ, our Lord and our God. A thing much to be observ'd in all our fervices, without which, indeed, they are no fervices at all. Infomuch, that should we pray our tongues to the stumps, and fast our bodies into skeletons; should we fill the air with fighs, and the fea with tears for fin; should we spend all our time in hearing of sermons, and our whole estates in relieving the poor; should we hazard our lives, yea, give our bodies to be burnt for our religion; yet nothing of all this would be accepted as a fervice unto God, unless it be perform'd out of sincere obedience to his laws, and with a fingle life, aiming at nothing but his glory, which ought to be the ultimate end of all our actions, I Cor. x. 31.

Secondly, We must not only serve God with a perfect heart, but with a willing mind too, now properly with a willing soul; that is, our will, and all the affections of our souls, should be carry'd after and exercised in the service of Almighty God. Our desires are to be enslamed towards it, our love fix'd upon it, and our delight plac'd in it. Thus the Israelites are said to have sought the Lord with their whole desire, 2 Chron. xv. 15. And we are commanded to love the Lord our God, and so to serve him with all our heart, and with all our soul, Deut. xi. 13. Yea, we are to delight to do the will of

of God, Pfal. xi. 8. as our Saviour did, faying, It is my meat to do the will of him that fent me, and to finish bis work, John iv. 34. Thus are we too to esteem the service of God above our neceffary food, pleafing our felves in pleafing him, and so make his service not only our business, but our recreation too; and whofoever doth not so, whatsoever he doth for God, he cannot be faid to ferve him, because he doth it against his will, and against the bent and inclination of his foul, and therefore, tho', as to the outward act, he may do that which God commands, yet inwardly he doth it not; because his foul is still averse from it, by which means it ceaseth to be the service of God, because it is not performed by the whole man, even foul and body, both which are necessarily requir'd in our performance of real fervice to him that made them both.

Thirdly, What is the reason why we ought to ferve God so? because he searcheth the hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; that is, he is throughly acquainted with every thought in our hearts, and with every motion and inclination of our fouls, infinitely better than our felves are. And therefore it is in vain for us to think to put him off with outward and formal, instead of inward and real fervice. For he doth not only fee what we do, but knows too what we think, while we are doing of it; and doth not only observe the matter of our actions, but the manner also of our performing them. It being his great prerogative to fearch the heart, and to try the reins, and to have all things naked and open unto him, Heb. iv. 13. fo that he sees what the soul doth within doors, in the secret closets of the heart, as clearly as what it doth without, in the open streets of the world; every affection of the soul being as manifest unto him as the actions of the body are: and therefore hypocrisy is the most soolish and ridiculous sin imaginable, making as if we could cheat and deceive God, and hide our sins from the all-seeing eyes of omniscience itself, or make God believe that we are holy, because we appear to be so to men.

But to bring this home more closely to our felves. We have been all at church, perhaps, performing our fervice and devotions to him that made us, it is true, as to our outward appearance, there hath been no great difference betwixt us; we have been equally present at these publick ordinances, and we do not know but one hath prayed and heard the word of God both read and preach'd as well as another; fo that feemingly our fervices are all alike as to us; but are they so to God too? That I much question; for he hath taken especial notice all along, not only of the outward gesture of our bodies, · but likewise of the inward behaviour of our hearts and fouls before him: and therefore, as I hope he hath feen many of us ferving him with a perfect heart and willing mind; so, I fear, he hath found too many of us tardy, coming before him as bis people come, and fitting before him as his people fit, while our hearts in the mean time have been about our covetousness; and hath plainly seen, tho' our bodies have been at church, our fouls have been elsewhere, thinking upon our relati-

Thus I have endeavour'd to shew both what it is to ferve God, and how we ought to do it:

ling mind.

now let us not think it sufficient that we know how to serve God, unless we serve him according to our knowledge. Let us remember our Saviour's words, If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them, John xiii. 17. Which happiness, that all who read this may attain unto, let me advise them, in the name of the eternal God that made them, to renounce and for fake their former matters, fin, fatan, and the world, whoever may have hitherto been inflav'd to them, and now dedicate themselves wholly to the fervice of him that made them for that very purpose, that they might serve him; yea, and who hath composed our natures so, that the highest happiness that we are capable of, consists in our ferving him: and therefore let us not think that he calls upon us to ferve him, because he wants our fervice; no, be it known unto all, that he is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his own perfection, and needs not the services of fuch poor filly mortals as we are, who have nothing but what we receive from him: and therefore he doth not call upon us to ferve him, because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without him, not because he wants our service, but because we want it; it being impossible for us to be happy, unless we be holy; or to enjoy God, unless we ferve him.

Wherefore all ye that defire to go to heaven, to have him that made you reconcil'd unto you, and smile upon you; or that desire to be really and truly happy, fet upon the work which God fent you into the world about; put it not off any

longer;

longer; make no more vain excuses; but from this day forward let the service of God be your daily, your continual employment and pleasure: study and contrive each day how to advance his glory and interest in the world, and how you may walk more strictly, more circumspectly, more conformably to his laws than ever. But whatsoever service you perform unto him, be fure to do it with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, think not to put him off with fancy instead of faith, or with outward performances instead of real duties; but remember that he fearcheth the hearts, and tryeth the reins of the fons of men, and observes the inward motions of the foul, as well as the outward actions of life: and therefore wherefoever you are, whatfoever you do, still bethink your felves, that he that made you still looks upon you, taking notice, not only of the matter of the actions which you do perform, but also of the manner of your performing them; and therefore be fure to have a special care in all your services for or unto God, that your hearts be fincere before him, and your minds inclined to him, that so you may ferve him with a perfect heart and a willing mind.

But to conclude, whoever ye are that read this discourse, I have here shewn you the things that belong unto your everlasting peace, having acquainted you with the method and manner of your serving God in time, in order to your enjoyment of him to eternity; how you are affected with what you have read, and whether you be resolved to practise it, yea or no, it is only the eternal God that knows: but this I know

that if you will not be persuaded to serve God, yea, and to serve him too with a persect heart and a willing mind, you will one day wish you had; but then it will be too late. And therefore if you will put it to the venture, go on still, and, with the unprofitable servant, hide your talents in a napkin, or lavish them out in the revils of sin and vanity; let thy belly be still thy God, and the world thy Lord; serve thy self, or satan, instead of the living God: but know that for all this God will bring thee into judgment; after which expect nothing else but to be overwhelm'd with horror and consusion to eternity.

Whereas, on the other side, such amongst you as shall sincerely endeavour from henceforth to serve God with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, I dare, I do assure them, in the name of God, their labour shall not be in vain in the Lord: for God suffers not his enemies to go unpunish'd, nor his servants

unrewarded.

And therefore go on with joy and triumph in the service of so great and so good a Master, and devote your selves wholly to his service, and employ your talents faithfully for his glory. Remember the time is but short; and Christ himself will receive you into eternal glory, saying, Well done, good and faithful servants.





And to! a weice from Reaven, faying, this is my beloved fon, in whom I am well pleated. Mat. 3.17

out

## THOUGHTS

UPON THE

## Mystery of the Trinity.



HOUGH there be many in the world that feem to be religious, there are but few that are so: one great reafon whereof is, because there are so many mistakes about religion, that

it is an hard matter to hit upon the true notion and therefore, defiring nothing in this world so much, as to be an instrument in God's hand to direct men unto true religion, my great care must, and, by the bleffing of God, shall be, to instill into them right conceptions of him that is the only object of all religious acts, without which it is impossible to continue, or indeed to be religious. The true nature and notion of religion confisting in the right carriage and deportment of our whole man, both foul and body, towards him that made us; whom therefore, unless we truly know, we can never be truly religious; and therefore they that begin their religion with zeal and passion, begin at the wrong end; for indeed they begin where they should end; our zeal for God, and love unto him, being the highest acts of religion, and therefore cannot be the first: but they necessarily presuppose the true knowledge of God, with-

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will be blind, and our love both groundless and transient.

But as it is impossible to be truly religious, unless we know God, so is it very difficult so to know him, as to become truly religious. It is true, that there is such a Supreme Being in and over the world, as we call God; the very light of nature teaches, and reason it self demonstrates it to be most certain and undeniable: but what he is, and what apprehensions we ought to have of this glorious Being, none but himself is able to describe and manifest unto us; so that our conceptions of him are still to be regulated by the discoveries that he hath made of himself to us, without which, tho' we may have some confus'd notions of him, yet we can never so know him, as to serve him faithfully, and, by conse-

quence, be truly religious.

Hence therefore, if we would know God, we must search the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, wherein God hath been pleas'd most clearly to manifest and discover himself unto us: I say, both the Old and New Testament; for otherwise, our knowledge of God may be very defective and erroneous, there being several things which God, in the New Testament, hath most plainly reveal'd of himself, which in the Old Testament are more darkly and obscurely deliver'd to us. As for example, the great mystery of the Trinity, though it be frequently intimated in the Old Testament, yet it is an hard matter rightly to understand it without the New: infomuch, that the Yews, tho' they have had the law above three thousand, and the prophets above

above two thousand years amongst them, yet, to this day, they could never yet make this an article of faith; but they, as well as the Mahometans still affert, That God is only one in person as well as nature: whereas nothing can be more plain from the New Testament, than that there is but one God, and yet there are three persons, every one of which is that one God: and so that tho' God be but one in nature, ye he is three in persons; and so three persons, as yet to be but one in nature.

And verily, altho' there was no other text in all the Scripture, whereon to ground this fundamental article of our christian faith, that of Matt. xxviii. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is a fufficient foundation for it; there being nothing, I think, necessary to be believ'd concerning the glorious Trinity, but what may eafily and naturally be deduc'd from these words, which were fpoken, it is true, by our Saviour before his Ascension; but I question whether they were throughly understood, till after the Holy Ghost was come down to earth. It being only by God himself that we can come to the true knowledge of him, much less are we able rightly to apprehend, and firmly to believe three persons in the Godhead, without the affiftance of one of them, that is, of the Holy Ghost; by whom the other two are wont to work, he being the isfue, as I may fo fay, and breath of both. Hence it is, that the wisdom of the church, for these many centuries, have thought fit to order, that this after the commemoration of the Holy Spirit's coming down upon his disciples, and in them upon all true believers; both because all three persons have now manifested themselves to mankind; the Father in his creation of them, the Son in his conversing with him, and the Holy Ghost by his coming down upon them: and also to shew, that it is only by the grace and assistance of God's Spirit, that we can rightly believe in this glorious and incomprehensible mystery, which our Saviour hath so clearly reveal'd to us in these words, Go ye, and teach

all nations, &c.

For the opening of which, we must know that our Saviour in the foregoing verse acquaints his disciples, that now all power was given him in beaven and in earth; by virtue whereof, he here iffueth forth his commission to his apostles, and, in them, to all that should succeed them, to fupply his room, and be his vicegerents upon earth, he being now to refide in his kingdom of heaven. For, faith he, all power is given to me in heaven and earth: Go ye therefore and teach all nations: as he also saith elsewhere to them, As my Father hath fent me, even so send I you, John xx. 21. as if he should have said, my Father having committed to me all power and authority both in heaven and earth, I therefore authorize and commissionate, yea, and command you to go and teach all nations, &c.

This therefore is part of the commission which our Lord and Master left with his apostles immediately before he parted from them. Those being

being the last words which St. Matthew records him to have spoken upon earth; and therefore they must needs contain matter of very great importance to his church, and it must needs highly concern us all to understand the true meaning and purport of them. Which that we may the better do, in treating of them, I shall observe the same method and order as he did in

fpeaking them.

First, Therefore, here is the work he fends the apostles about, Go ye therefore and teach, mogenderles En madnidade, which more properly may be render'd, Go ye therefore and disciple all nations, to be my disciples, that is, Christians. That this is the true meaning of the words, is plain and clear from the right notion of the word here used, mad never, which coming from madning, a disciple, it always fignifieth either to be, or to make disciples, wheresoever it occurs in all the feriptures, as madnreudie, Matt. xiii. 52, which is instructed, say we, the Syriac better, 32LAS? that is, made a disciple, a תלמיר that is, not only a scholar or learner, but a follower or professor of the gospel, here call'd the kingdom of heaven. Another place where this word occurs, is Mate. xxvii. 57. εμαθήτευσε τω 'Inσε where we rightly translate it, was Jesus disciple. Another place is, Acts xiv. 21. nj uadnodisaviss inairis, which we improperly render, bave taught many, the Syriac and Arabic, more properly, having made many disciples. And these are all the places in the New Testament where this word is used, except those I am now considering, where all the eastern languages render it accord-E 4 ing

ing to this notation, disciple. The Persian paraphrastically expounds it, Go ye and reduce all nations to my faith and religion. So that whosoever pleads for any other meaning of these words, do but betray their own ignorance in the original languages, and, by consequence, in the true

interpretation of Scripture.

I should not have infisted so long upon this, but that the false exposition of these words hath occasion'd that no less dangerous than numerous fect of Anabaptists in the world; for the old Latin translation having it, Euntes ergo docete omnes gentes; hence the German, where Anabaptism first began; and all the modern translations render it as we do, Go ye therefore and teach all nations, baptizing them. From whence it was supposed by some that were not able to dive into the true meaning of the words, that our Saviour here commanded, that none should be baptiz'd but fuch as were first taught the principles of the christian religion, which is the greatest mistake imaginable; for our Saviour doth not speak one word of teaching before baptism, but only after, ver. 20. Sisárnois, his meaning being only that his apostles should go about the world, and perfuade all nations to forfake their former idolatries and superstitions, and to turn christians, or the disciples of Jesus Christ, and such as were so should be baptiz'd. And therefore infant-baptism is so far from being forbidden, that it is expresly commanded in these words; for all disciples are here commanded to be baptiz'd; nay, they are therefore commanded to be baptiz'd, because disciples. And seeing

all disciples are to be baptiz'd, so are infants too. the children of believing parents, for they are disciples as well as any other, or as well as their parents themselves: for all that are in covenant with God must needs be disciples. that children were always esteemed in covenant with God, is plain in that God himself commanded the covenant should be feal'd to them, as it was all along by circumcifion. But that children are disciples as well as others, our Saviour puts it out of all doubt, faying of children, of fuch is the kingdom of God, Mark x. 14. And therefore they must needs be disciples, less such as are not disciples can belong to the kingdom of God, which a man must be strangely distemper'd in his brain before he can so much as fancy.

And besides, that children, so long as children are look'd upon as part of their parents; and therefore as their parents are, so are they: If the parents be Heathen, so are the children: if the parents be Jews, so are the children; if the parents be Christian, so are the children too; nay, if either of the parents be a christian or disciple, the children of both are denominated from the better part, and so look'd upon as christians too, as is plain, I Cor. vii. 14. But now are they holy, that is, in a federal or covenant sense, they are in covenant with God; they are believers, christians, or disciples, because one

of their parents is fo.

Now feeing children are disciples as well as others, and our Saviour here commands all disciples to be baptiz'd, it necessarily follows, that children

children must be baptiz'd too. So that the opinion which asserts, that children ought not to be baptiz'd, is grounded upon a meer mistake, and upon gross ignorance of the true meaning of the scripture, and especially of this place, which is most ridiculously mistaken for a prohibition, it being rather a command for infant-baptism.

But I must crave the reader's excuse for this digression from the matter principally intended, tho' I could not tell how to avoid it; nothing being more needful, than to rescue the words of our blessed Saviour from those false glosses and horrible abuses which these last ages have put upon them, especially it coming so directly

in my ways as this did.

Secondly, Here is the extent of their commiffion, which is very large indeed, not being directed to some few particular persons, but to nations; nor to fome particular nations only, but to all nations; go ye therefore and disciple all nations; or, all the world, as it is, Mark xvi. 15. This was that which the prophet Isaiab, or rather God by him, foretels, Isaiab xlix. 6. which our Saviour himself seems to have respect unto, Luke xxiv. 46, 47. The meaning whereof, in brief, is this, that tho' the Jews hitherto had been the only people of God, and none but they admitted into covenant with him, now the Gentiles also are to be brought in, and made confederates, or co-partners with them, in the covenant of Grace; that the partition-wall being now broke down, the gospel is to be preached to all other nations, as well as the Jewish; Christ being now come to be a light to lighten the the Gentiles, as well as the glory of his people If-

But tho' the words of the commission be so clear to this purpose, yet the apostles themselves understood it not, till God had interpreted it from heaven to St. Peter, shewing him in a vision, that he should call no man common or unclean, Acts x. 28. From which time forward, he, with the rest of the apostles, observ'd their commission exactly in preaching to the Gentiles as well as the Yews. And this was one end wherefore the Holy Ghost came down amongst them, even to enable them to do what their Mafter had commanded them. For he had here commanded them to preach unto all nations; but that they could not do, unless they could fpeak all languages, which therefore the Holy Ghost enabled them to do, Acts ii. 4, 5. which also is a clear demonstration of the true meaning and purport of these words: for there was no necessity that the Spirit should teach the apoftles all languages, but that the Son had first enjoyned them to preach unto all nations.

Thirdly, Hence is the manner whereby they are to admit all nations into the church of Christ, or into the christian religion, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. For the opening whereof, we must know that baptism was a rite in common use amongst the Jews before our Saviour's time, by which they were wont to admit profelytes into their religion, baptizing them in the name of the Father, or of God. A little before our Saviour's appearance in the world, John Baptist

Baptist being sent to prepare the way for him, baptiz'd the Jews themselves, as many as came unto him in the name of the Messiah to come, which was call'd the baptism of repentance. I indeed baptize you, fays he, with water to repentance; but he that comes after me, is mightier than I, &c. Matth. iii. 11. But when our Saviour was to go to heaven, he left orders with his apostles to make disciples, or admit all nations into the religion which he had preach'd, confirm'd with miracles, and feal'd with his own blood, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son; and Holy Ghost; which form of baptism, questionless, his apostles faithfully obferved all along, as may be gathered also from Acts xix. 2, 3. where we may observe, how when they faid, they had not so much as heard of an Holy Ghost, he wondering at that, asked them, Unto what then were ye baptiz'd? plainly intimating, that if they had been baptiz'd aright, according to Christ's institution, they could not but have heard of the Holy Ghost, because they had been baptiz'd in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; but ver. 5. as also Acts ii. 38. chap. viii. 16. we read of baptism administred in the name of the Lord Jesus. From whence fome have thought, that the apoftles baptiz'd only the Gentiles, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, but the Jews in the name of the Lord Jesus only; because they believing in the Father already, if they were but baptized in the name of Jejus, and so testified their belief that he was the Messiah, they could not but believe

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in his Spirit too: but this expression of baptizing in the name of the Lord Jesus, seems to me rather to intimate that form of baptism which the Lord Jesus instituted; for, doubtless, the apostless observed the precepts of our Lord better than so, as to do it one way, when he had commanded it to be done another; and baptiz'd only in the name of Jesus, when he had enjoyned them to baptize in the name of the Father, and

the Son, and the Holy Ghoft.

Neither did the church ever esteem the baptism valid, which was not administer'd exactly according to the institution, in the name of all the three persons, which the primitive christians were so strict in the observance of, that it was enjoyn'd, that all persons to be baptiz'd should be plung'd three times into the water, first at the name of the Father, and then at the name of the Son, and, lastly, at the name of the Holy Ghost; that so every person might be distinctly nominated, and so our Saviour's institution exactly observ'd in the administration of this sacrament.

Hence also it was, that all persons to be baptiz'd, were always requir'd, either with their own mouths, if adult, or if infants, by their sureties, to make a publick confession of their faith in the three persons, into whose names they were to be baptiz'd: for this indeed was always look'd upon as the sum and substance of the christian religion, to believe in God the Father, in God the Son, and in God the Holy Ghost; and they who believ'd in these three persons, were still repu-

christians; and they who did not, were esteem'd infidels or hereticks.

Yea, and our Saviour himself hath sufficiently declar'd how necessary it is for us to believe this great mystery; as also how essential it is to a christian, seeing that he requires no more in order to our initiation into his church, but only that we be baptiz'd in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. In which words we

may observe,

First, A Trinity of persons into whose names we are baptiz'd, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. This is that mystery of mysteries which is too high for human understandings to conceive, but not too great for a divine faith to believe, even that although there be but one God, there are three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, every one of which is that one and the self-same God; and therefore it is that baptism is here commanded to be administred in the name of all three.

Now, to confirm our faith in this great myflery whereinto we were all baptiz'd, I shall endeavour to shew, in few terms, what grounds we
have in scripture to believe it. For which end
we must know, that tho' this mystery hath receiv'd great light, by the rising of the sun of
righteousness upon the world, yet it did not lie
altogether undiscover'd before, yea, from the very foundation of the world; the church, in all
ages, hath had sufficient ground whereupon to
build their faith on this great and sundamental
truth: For in the very creation of the world,
he that created it is call'd not lie
in the plural number: and in the creation of man, he said, Let us
make

make man in our own image; from whence, tho not a Trinity, yet a plurality of persons is plainly manifested; yea, in the beginning of the world too, we find both Father, Son, and Spirit, con-

curring in the making of it.

For, first, It is said, that God created heaven and earth, and then, that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters, Gen. i. 2. There are two persons, God, and the Spirit of God. And then we read how God made the world by his Word; he said, Let there be light, and there was light. From which expression St. John himself concludes, That all things were made by the Son of God, or his Word, John i. 3. and so does St. Paul, Col. i. 16.

Thus we read afterwards, The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his Word by my tongue. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. where we have Jehovah, the Spirit of Jehovah, and the Word of Jehovah, plainly and distinctly set down. As also in Psal. xxxiii. 6. and Isa. xlii. 1. where there is the Lord speaking of his Son, and saying, that he will put his Spirit upon him: and this also seems to be the reason, why the holy angels, when they praise God, say, Holy, holy, holy, Lord of hosts, Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. saying, Holy thrice, in reverence to

the three persons, they adore.

Thus we might discover this truth in the Old Testament; but in the New we can scarce look over it: for when Jesus was baptiz'd, Mat. iii. 16. had we, who know nothing but by our senses, been present at this time with Jesus at Jordan, our very senses would have convey'd this truth to our understandings whether we would

beaven; whose was it, but God the Father's? Here we should have seen one coming out of fordan; who was that, but God the Son? Here we should have seen something else too, in the form of a Dove, who was that, but God the Spirit? Thus was God the Father heard speaking, God the Son was seen ascending out of the water, and God the Holy Ghost descending from heaven upon him. The first was heard in the sound of a voice, the second was seen in the form of a man, and the third was beheld in the shape of a dove.

Voce Pater, Natus corpore, Flamen ave.

But there are many fuch places as this all the New Testament over, where the three persons, of the Godhead are distinctly mention'd, as Luke i. 35. John xiv. 16, 26. Chap. xvi. 7. Galat. iv. 6. But the words of St. Paul are very remarkable too, 2 Cor. xiii. 14. And yet that all these three persons are but one God, Gen. xviii. 9. John x. 30. St. John expresly afferts, saying, There are three that bare record in heaven, the Father, and the Word, and the Spirit, and these three are one, 1 John v. 7. Which certainly are as plain and perspicuous terms as it is possible to express fo great a mystery in. But I indeed not have gone so far to have prov'd, that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead, the words I am treating of being a sufficient demonstration of it: for all the three persons met together at our Saviour's baptism, so doth our Saviour here command, that all his disciples be baptiz'd in the name

name of all three: And therefore I cannot but admire how any one should dare to profess himself to be a Christian, and yet deny or oppose the facred Trinity, into which he was baptiz'd when he was made a Christian: For, by this means, he, renouncing his baptism, blasphemes Christ, unchristians himself, blotting his own name out of the catalogue of those who were made Christians only by being baptiz'd in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

of the Holy Ghost.

II. Here is the Godhead of the Trinity, or of every person in the Trinity, that one as well as the other is God: For here we see divine worship is to be perform'd to them all; and all that profess the true religion must be baptiz'd in the name of the Son and the Holy Ghost, as well as of the Father; which certainly would be the greatest absurdity, yea, the most horrid impiety imaginable, were not they God as well as he. For if they be not God, they are creatures; if they be creatures, reason as well as scripture forbids the same honour and worship to be conferr'd on them, which is given to God himself, and only due to him; which here, notwithstanding, we see is given to them, and that by our Lord himself, commanding baptism to be administer'd in his own name, and in the name of the Holy Ghoft, as well as in the name of the Father; and so making himself and the Spirit equal sharers in the same honour that is given to the Father. So that was there no other place in the whole scripsure to prove it, this alone would be sufficient spirit are God as well as the Father, or, rather, the same God with him. But that I may unveil this mystery, and confirm this truth more clearly, we will consider each person distinctly, and shew, that one as well as the other is real-

ly and truly God.

That the Father is God, none ever deny'd it. But if the Father be God, the Son must needs be God too; for the same names, properties, works and worship, which, in scripture, are afcrib'd to the Father, are frequently ascrib'd to the Son also in scripture: The Father is call'd Jehovah in scripture, so is the Son, Hos. i. 3. Jer. xxiii. 6. The Father is call'd God, so is the Son, John i. 1. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God; with God, as to his person; God, as to his nature. So also John xx. 28. Acts xx. 28, &c. Moreover, is the Father Alpha and Omega, the first and the last? so is the Son, Rev. i. 8. Is the Father eternal? so is the Son, Isai. ix. 6. Rev. i. 8. Is the Father almighty? fo is the Son, Heb. i. 3. Is the Father every where? so is the Son, Matt. xviii. 20. Doth the Father know all things? fo doth the Son, John xxi. 17. chap. ii. 24. Did the Father make all things? fo did the Son, John i. 3. Doth the Father preserve all things? so doth the Son, Heb. i. 3. Doth the Father forgive fins? so doth the Son, Matt. ix. 6. Is the Father to be worshipped? fo is the Son, Heb. i. 6. Is the Father to be honour'd? so is the Son, John v. 23. No won-

Son?

wonder therefore that Christ being thus in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God, Phil. ii. 6. He did not rob God of any glory, by faying himself was equal to him. The greatest wonder is, how any one can believe the Scriptures to be the word of God, and yet deny this great truth, than which nothing can be more plain from scripture, nothing being more frequently and more clearly afferted than this is. And, verily, it is well for us that it is fo; for if Christ was not God, neither could he be our Saviour. None being able to free us from our fins, but only he against whom they were committed. And therefore I cannot imagine how any one can doubt of Christ's divinity, and yet expect pardon and falvation from him, all our hopes and expectations from him depending only upon his affumption of our humane nature into a divine person.

And that the Holy Ghost also is God, is frequently afferted in the holy scriptures, which himself indited. Indeed, his very inditing of the scriptures was a clear argument of his Deity, as well as the scriptures indited by him. What man, what angel, what creature, who but God, could compose such articles of faith, enjoin such divine precepts, foretel and sulfil such prophecies as in scripture are contain'd? who spake unto or by the prophets? Whom did they mean when they said, Thus saith the Lord of host? Who was the Lord of host, that instructed them what to speak or write? Was it God the Father, or God the

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Son? No, but it was God the Holy Ghost: For the prophecy came not inold time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. i. 21. Acts xxviii. 25, chap. xxi. 11. The Holy Ghost therefore being the Lord of hosts, he must needs be God, there being no person that is, or can be call'd the Lord of hosts, but he that is the very and eternal God.

This also may be gather'd from 1 Cor. iii. 16. Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and the Spirit of God dwelleth in you; for none can be the temple of God but he in whom God dwells; for it is God's dwelling in a place that makes that place the temple of God, and yet we are here said to be the temple of God, because the Spirit dwelleth in us. And so elsewhere, Know ye not, saith the apostle, that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost that is in you? 1 Cor. vi. 19. which could not be unless the Holy Ghost was God.

Another express scripture we have for it in Acts v. 3, 4. where St. Peter propounds this question to Ananias, Why hath satan fill'd thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost? And then tells him in the next verse, Thou hast not ly'd to men but to God: And so expressly afferts the Holy

Ghost to be God.

Moreover, that the Holy Ghost is truly God, coequal to the Father and Son, is plain, in that the scriptures assert him to be, to have, and to do, whatsoever the Father or Son is, hath, or doth, as God. For, is the Father and Son eternal? so is the Spirit, Heb. ix. 14. Is God

God the Father and the Son every where? fo is the Spirit, Pfal. cxxxix. 7. Is God the Father, and the Son, a wife, understanding, powerful, and knowing God? fo is the Spirit, Isaiab xi. 2. Are we baptiz'd in the name of the Father and the Son? fo are we baptiz'd in the name of the Holy Ghost. May we sin against the Father and the Son? fo may we fin too against the Holy Ghost. Nay, the fin against this person only, is accounted by our Saviour to be a fin never to be pardon'd, Matt. xii. 31, 32. We may sin against God the Father, and our sin be pardon'd; we may fin against God the Son, and our sin may be pardon'd: But if we sin or speak against the Holy Ghost, that shall never be forgiven, neither in this world, nor yet in that which is But if the Holy Shoft be not God, how can we fin against nim? Or how comes our fin against him only to be unpardonable, unless he be God? I know it is not therefore unpardonable because he is God, for then the fins against the Father and the Son would be unpardonable too, feeing they both are God as well as he: Yet tho' this fin is not therefore unpardonable because he is God, yet it could not be unpardonable unless he was God: For, supposing him not to be God, but a creature, and yet the fin against him to be unpardonable, then the fin against a creature would be unpardonable, when fins against God himfelf are pardon'd: Which to fay, would, itself, I think, come near to the fin against the Holy Ghost. But seeing our Saviour describes this unpardonable fin, by blaspheming or speaking against against the Holy Ghost, let them have a care that they be not found guilty of it, who dare deny the Holy Ghost to be really and truly God, and so blaspheme and speak the worst that they can against him.

III. We have seen what ground we have to believe that there are three persons in the Godhead, and that every one of these persons is God; we are now to consider the order of those persons in the Trinity, describ'd in the words before us.

First, The Father, and then the Son, and then the Holy Ghost, every one of which is really and truly God, and yet they are All but One real and true God. A mystery which we are all bound to believe, but yet must have a great care how we fpeak of it; it being both eafy and dangerous to mistake in expressing so mysterious a truth as this is. If we think of it, how hard is it to contemplate upon one numerically divine nature, in more than one and the same divine person? Or, upon three divine persons, in no more than one and the same divine nature? If we foeak of it, how hard is it to find out fit words to express it? If I say, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, be three, and every one distinctly God, it is true: But if I say, they be three, and every one a distinct God, it is false. I may say, the divine persons are distinct in the divine nature; but I cannot say, that the divine nature is divided into the divine persons. I may say, God the Father is one God, and the Son is one God, and the Holy Ghost is one God: But I cannot say, that the Father is one God, and the Son another God, and the Holy Ghost a third God. I may say, the

the Father begat another who is God; yet I cannot fay, that he begat another God: And, from the Father and the Son proceeded another who is God; yet I cannot fay, from the Father and the Son proceedeth another God. For, all this while, tho' their nature be the fame, their perfons are distinct, and tho' their persons be distinct, still their nature is the same. So that the' the Father be the first person in the Godhead, the Son the fecond, the Holy Ghost the third; yet the Father is not the first, the Son a second, the Holy Ghost a third God. So hard a thing is it to word fo great a mystery aright, or to fit so high a truth with expressions suitable and proper to it, without going, one way or another, from it. And therefore I shall not use many words about it, lest some should slip from me unbecoming of it: But in as few terms as I can I will endeavour to shew, upon what account the Father is the first, the Son the second, and the Holy Ghost the third person in the Trinity.

First, Therefore, the Father is plac'd first, and really is the first person, not as if he was before the other two, for they are all coeternal; but because the other two receiv'd their essence from him: for the Son was begotten of the Father; and the Holy Ghost proceeded both from Father and Son: and therefore the Father is termed by the primitive christians, Piza & Any in Octoral October the root and the fountain of deity. As in waters there is the sountain or well-head; then there is the spring that boils up out of that sountain; and then there is the stream that slows both from the sountain and the spring;

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and yet all these are but one and the same water: so here, God the Father is the fountain of deity; the Son, as the spring that boils up out of the fountain, and the Holy Ghost, that flows from both; and yet all three is but one and the fame God: the same may be also explain'd by another familiar instance: the sun, you know, begets beams, and from the fun and beams together proceed the light and heat: fo God the Father begets the Son, and from the Father and Son together proceeds the Spirit of knowledge and grace. But as the fun is not before the beams, nor the beams before the light and heat, but all are together: so neither is Father before the Son, nor Father or Son before the Holy Ghost, but only in order and relation to one another, in which only respect the Father is

the first person in the Trinity.

Secondly, The Son is the fecond person, who is call'd the Son, yea, and the only begotten Son of God, because he was begotten of the Father, not as others are, by spiritual regeneration, but by eternal generation, as none but himself is: for the opening whereof we must know, that God that made all things fruitful, is not himfelf steril or barren; but he that hath given power to animals to generate and produce others in their own nature, is himself much more able to produce one, not only like himself; but of the felf-same nature with himself; as he did in begetting his Son, by communicating his own unbegotten essence and nature to him. For the person of the Son was most certainly begotten of the Father, otherwise he would not be his Son

Son; but his essence was unbegotten, otherwise he would not be God. And therefore the highest apprehensions that we can frame of this great mystery, the eternal generation of the Son of God, is only by conceiving the person of the Father to have communicated his divine effence to the person of the Son. And so of himself begetting his other Self the Son, by communicating his own eternal and unbegotten effence to him: I fay, by communicating of his effence. not of his person, to him; for then they would be both the same person, as now they are of the fame essence: the essence of the Father did not beget the Son, by communicating his person to him; but the person of the Father begat the Son, by communicating his effence to him: fo that the person of the Son is begotten, not communicated; but the effence of the Son is communicated, not begotten.

This notion of the Father's begetting the Son, by communicating his effence to him, I ground upon the Son's own words, who certainly best knew how himself was begotten; for, as the Father, saith he, hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself, John v. 26. To have life in himself, is an essential property of the divine nature; and therefore where-soever that is given or communicated, the nature it self must needs be given and communi-

cated too.

Now here we see how God the Father communicated this his essential property, and so his essence, to the Son; and, by consequence, tho' he be a distinct person from him, yet he hath the same

fame unbegotten essence with him: and therefore, as the Father hath life in himself, so hath the Son life in himself; and so all other essential properties of the divine nature, only with this personal distinction, that the Father hath this life in himself, not from the Son, but from himself; whereas the Son hath it, not from himself but from the Father: or, the Father is God, of himself, not of the Son; the Son is the same God, but from the Father, not from himself; and, therefore, not the Father, but the Son is rightly call'd by the council of Nice, God of God,

light of light, yea, very God of very God.

Thirdly, Having thus spoken of the two first persons in the facred Trinity, we now come to the last, the Holy Ghost. The last, I say, not in nature or time, but only in order: for, as to their nature, one is not better or more God than another; neither, as to time, is one before another, none of them being measur'd by time, but all and every one of them eternity it felf. But tho' not in nature or time, yet in order, one must needs be before another: for the Father is of himself, receiving his essence neither from the Son nor from the Spirit, and therefore is, in order, before both; the Son receiv'd his essence from the Father, not from the Spirit, and therefore, in order, is before the Spirit, as well as after the Father; but the Spirit receiving his effence both from the Father and the Son, must needs, in order, be after both.

I confess, the Spirit is no where in scripture said to proceed from the Son; and therefore the inserting this into the Nicene Creed, was the oc-

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casion of that schism betwixt the Western and Eastern churches, which hath now continued for many ages; in which, I think, both parties are blame-worthy; the Western churches, for inserting this clause following into the Nicene Creed, without the consent of a general council; and the Eastern, for denying so plain a truth as this is: for tho' the Spirit be not faid to proceed from the Son, yet he is call'd the Spirit of the Son, Gal. iv. 6. Rom. viii. 9. which, questionless, he would never have been, did not he proceed from the Son, as well as from the Fa-And verily, the Father communicating his own individual effence, and fo whatfoever he is, (his paternal relation excepted) to the Son, could not but communicate this to him alfo, even to have the Spirit proceeding from him, as it doth from himself. So that as whatsoever the Father hath originally in himself, that hath the Son by communication from the Father: fo hath the Son this, the Spirit's proceeding from him by communication from the Father, as the Father hath it in himself: and the Spirit thus proceeding both from the Father and the Son, hence it is that he is plac'd after both, not only in the words before us, but also in 1 John v. 7. and fo elfewhere.

From what I have hitherto discours'd concerning this great mystery, the trinity in unity, and unity in trinity, I shall gather some inferences, and so conclude.

1. Is the Son GOD, yea, the same God with the Father? hence I observe, what a strange mystery the work of man's redemption is, that God

God himself should become man: and he that was begotten of his Father, without a mother, from eternity, should be born of his mother, without a Father, in time; that he who was perfect God, like unto the Father in every thing, his personal properties only excepted, should also be perfect man, like unto us in all things, our personal infirmities only excepted; that he that made the world should be himself made in it; that eternity should stoop to time, glory be wrapt in misery, and the sun of righteousness hid under a clod of earth; that innocence should be betray'd, justice condemn'd, and life it self should die, and all to redeem man from death to life. Oh wonder of wonders! how justly may we fay with the apostle, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness, I Tim. iii. 16.

2. Is the Spirit also GOD? hence I observe, that it is God alone that can make us holy; for seeing the scripture all along ascribes our fanctification unto the Spirit of God, and yet the Spirit of God is himself really and truly God, it necessarily solloweth, that the special concurrence and insluence of Almighty God himself is necessary to the making us really and

truly holy.

3. Are all three persons in the Trinity one and the same God? hence I infer, they are to have one and the same honour conferr'd upon them, and one and the same worship persorm'd unto them: or, as our Saviour himself saith, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 23. and, ye believe in God, believe also in me, John xiv. 1. and, as we pray

to the Father, so should we pray to the Son too, as the apostles did, Luke xvii. 5. and St. Ste-phen, Acts vii. 59. and St. Paul to all three,

2 Cor. xiii. 24.

4. Is baptism to be administer'd in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost? hence I observe how necessary it is to believe in these three persons, in order to our being real and true christians: for we being made christians in the name of all three, that man ceaseth to be a christian that believes only in one: for faith in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, is necessary to the very constitution of a christian; and is the principal, if not the only characteristical note whereby to distinguish a christian from another man, yea, from a Turk: for this is the chief thing that the Turks, both in their Alcoran and other writings, upbraid christians for, even because they believe a Trinity of persons in the divine nature: for which cause they frequently say, they are people that believe God hath companions; fo that take away this article of our christian faith, and what depends upon it, and there would be but a little difference betwixt a christian and a Turk: but by this means Turks would not turn christians, but christians Turks, if this fundamental article of the christian religion was once remov'd: for he that doth not believe this, is no christian upon that very account, because he doth not believe this by which a christian is made: and whatsoever else errors a man may hold, yet if he believes in God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghoft, I cannot,

I dare not but acknowledge him to be a christian in general, because he holds fast to the foundation of the christian religion, tho', perhaps, he may build upon it bay and stubble, and so his

superstructure be infirm and rotten.

I shall conclude with a word of advice to all fuch as call themselves by the name of Christ: I suppose and believe they are all christians, from their taking that name: and therefore I need not use any arguments to persuade them to turn christians, for so they are already by profession; but, feeing that they are christians, let me defire them to confider how they came to be fo; even by being baptiz'd in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And if they defire to be christians still, I must advise them to continue stedfast in that faith whereby they were made fo. Of all the errors and herefies which fatan hath fow'd amongst us, let us have an especial care to avoid such as strike at the very foundation of our religion; I mean the Arians, Macedonians, Socinians, and all manner of Anti-Trinitarians, such as deny the most facred Trinity.

But I hope we have better learn'd Christ, than to hearken to such opinions as these are; and therefore my next advice in brief is only this, that as we excel ethers in truth of our profession, so we would excel them also in holiness of our life and conversation: let us manifest our selves to be christians indeed, by believing the affertions, trusting on the promises, fearing the threatnings, and obeying the precepts of Christ our Master, that both insidels

and hereticks may be convinc'd of their errors. by feeing us outstripping them in our piety towards God, equity to our neighbours, charity to the poor, unity amongst our selves, and love to all: for this would be a clear demonstration that our faith is better than theirs is, when our lives are holier than theirs are. And for our encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, that if we believe thus, as Christ hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we shall also obtain what he hath promis'd, even eternal happiness in the world to come; where we shall see, enjoy, and praise that God, into whose name we are baptiz'd, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for evermore. There, with Angels and Archangels, with the heavens and all the powers therein, with Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the bless'd inhabitants of those everlasting mansions, with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all the company of heaven, and the holy church throughout all the world, we shall eternally laud and magnify thy facred name: " O God, the Father of heaven; " O God, the Son, redeemer of the world: O " God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the " Father and the Son; O Holy, bleffed and " glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, " evermore praising thee, the Father of an in-" finite majesty; together with thine honoura-" ble, true, and only Son; thee, the king of glory, " O Christ; and thee, O Holy Ghost, the com-" forter": still joyning with the heavenly choir, and faying, "Holy, holy, Lord God I dare not but acknowledge him to be a christian in general, because he holds fast to the foundation of the christian religion, tho', perhaps, he may build upon it bay and stubble, and so his

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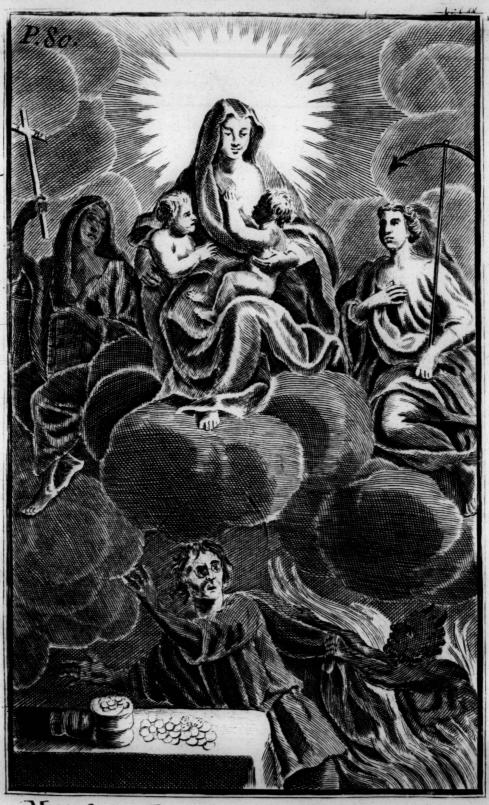
and hereticks may be convinc'd of their errors. by feeing us outstripping them in our piety towards God, equity to our neighbours, charity to the poor, unity amongst our selves, and love to all: for this would be a clear demonstration that our faith is better than theirs is, when our lives are holier than theirs are. And for our encouragement thereunto, I dare engage, that if we believe thus, as Christ hath taught us, and live as he hath commanded us, we shall also obtain what he hath promis'd, even eternal happiness in the world to come; where we shall fee, enjoy, and praise that God, into whose name we are baptiz'd, even Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for evermore. There, with Angels and Archangels, with the heavens and all the powers therein, with Cherubin and Seraphin, and all the bless'd inhabitants of those everlasting mansions, with the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, all the company of heaven, and the holy church throughout all the world, we shall eternally laud and magnify thy facred name: " O God, the Father of heaven; " O God, the Son, redeemer of the world: O " God, the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the " Father and the Son; O Holy, bleffed and " glorious Trinity, three persons and one God, " evermore praising thee, the Father of an in-" finite majesty; together with these honoura-" ble, true, and only Son; thee, the king of glory, " O Christ; and thee, O Holy Ghost, the com-" forter": still joyning with the heavenly choir, and faying, "Holy, holy, Lord God

of hofts, heaven and earth are full of thy " glory; glory be to thee, O Lord, most high. "We praise thee, we bless thee, we worship " thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks to thee, " for thy great glory, O Lord God, heavenly " king, God the Father almighty. O Lord. " the only begotten Son, Jesu Christ, O Lord " God, lamb of God, Son of the Father, that " takest away the fins of the world, and fittest " at the right hand of God the Father. O blef-" fed, glorious, and eternal Spirit; for thou " only art holy, thou only art the Lord; thou " only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art " most high in the glory of God the Father; " for thine, O Lord, is the kingdom, and the " power, and the glory, for ever and ever. ec Amen.

Almighty and everlasting God, who hast given unto us thy servants, grace, by the confession of a true faith, to acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and in the power of the divine majesty to worship the Unity, we beseech thee that thou wouldst keep us stedfast in this faith, and evermore defend us from all adversities; who livest and reignest one God, world without end. Amen.

And now having led the christian thro' the first stage of this course, and instructed him in the principles of his religion, and in the great mystery of this Trinity, into which he was baptiz'd, it may be sit to bring him into the world, and shew him how he ought to demean himself in regard to the things of it,





Mat.6.21. For where the Treasure is there

# THOUGHTS

UPON

## Worldly Riches.

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E that feriously considers the constitution of the christian religion, observing the excellency of its doctrines, the clearness of its precepts, the severity of its threatnings, together

with the faithfulness of its promises, and the certainty of its principles to trust to; fuch a one may justly be astonish'd, and admire what should be the reason that they who profess this not only the most excellent, but only true religion in the world, should, notwithstanding, be generally as wicked, debauch'd and prophane, as they that never heard of it. For that they are fo, is but too plain and obvious to every one that observes their actions, and compares them with the practices of Jews, Turks and Infidels. what fin have they amongst them which we have not as rife amongst our selves? are they intemperate and luxurious? are they envious and malicious against one another? are they uncharitable and cenforious? are they given to extortion, rapine, and oppression? so are most of those who are call'd christians. Do they blaspheme the name of God, profane his sabbaths, contemn his word, despise his ordinances, and trample upon the blood of his only son? How many have we amongst our selves that do these things

as much as they?

But how comes this about, that they who are baptiz'd into the name of Christ, and profess the religion which he establish'd in the world, should be no better than other people, and in some refpects far worse? Is it because though they profess the gospel, yet they do not understand it; nor know what fins are forbidden, nor what duties are enjoined in it? That none can plead, especially amongst us who have the gospel so clearly reveal'd, fo fully interpreted, fo constantly preach'd to us as we have: infomuch, that if there be any one person amongst us, that understands not what is necessary to be known, in order to our everlasting happiness, it is because we will not, wilfully shutting our eyes against the light.

But what then shall we impute this wonder to, that christians are generally as bad as heathens? Does Christ in his gospel dispense with their impieties, and give them indulgences for their sins, and licence to break the moral law? It is true, his pretended vicar at Rome doth so; but far be it from us to father our sins upon him, who came into the world on purpose to save us from them. Indeed, if we repent and turn from sin, he hath both purchas'd and promis'd pardon and forgiveness to us, but not till then; but hath expressly told us the contrary, assuring us, that except we repent we must all perish, Luke xiii. 3.

I confess there have been such blasphemous hereticks amongst us, call'd Antimonians, who are altogether for faith without good works, making as if Christ by erecting his gospel destroy'd the moral law; but none can entertain fuch an horrible opinion as that is, whose finful practices have not so far deprav'd their principles, that they believe it is so, because they would have it to be fo, directly contrary to our Saviour's own words, Matt. v. 17. Think not that I am come to destroy the law and the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. But I hope here is none of us but have better learn'd Christ, than to think that he came to patronize our fins, who was fent to bless us, by turning away every one of us from our iniquities, Acts iii. 26. But how come christians then to be as bad and finful as other men? Is it because they are as destitute as other men of all means whereby to become better? No, this cannot possibly be the reafon: for nothing can be more certain, than that we all have, or at least may, if we will, have whatfoever can any ways conduce to the making us either holy here or happy hereafter. We have the way that leads thereto reveal'd to us in the word of God: we have that word frequently expounded and apply'd to us; we have all free access, not only to the ordinances which God hath appointed for our conversion, but even to the very facraments themselves, whereby our faith may be confirm'd, and our fouls nourish'd And more than all this too, we to eternal life. have many gracious and faithful promises, that if we do but what we can, God, for Christ's sake, will afford us fuch affiftances of his grace and G 2 spirit spirit, whereby we shall be enabled to perform universal obedience to the moral law, such as God, for Christ's sake, will accept of, instead of that perfection which the law requires. that now, if we be not all as real and true faints, as good and pious christians as ever liv'd, it is certainly our own faults: for we have all things necessary for the making of us such; and if we are not wanting to our felves, it is impossible we should fail of having all our fins subdu'd under us, and all true grace and virtue implanted in us: infomuch, that fince the christian religion was first reveal'd to the world, there have been certainly millions of fouls converted by it, who now are glorified faints in heaven, which once were as finful creatures upon earth as we now are. But it feems they found the gospel an effectual means of conversion and salvation; and therefore it cannot be imputed to any defect in the gospel, or the christian religion, that we are not all as good men as ever liv'd, and, by consequence, better than the professors of all other religions in the world.

But what then shall we say to this wonder of wonders, that christians themselves in our age live such loose and dissolute lives as generally they do? What should be the reason that all manner of sin and evil should be both practis'd and indulg'd amongst us, as much as in the darkest corners of the world, upon which the gospel never yet shin'd? Why, when we have search'd into all the reasons that possibly can be imagin'd, next to the degeneracy and corruption of our nature, this must needsbe acknowledg'd asone of the chief

and principal, that men living upon earth, and converfing ordinarily with nothing but fenfible and material objects, they are so much taken up with them, that those divine and spiritual truths, which are reveal'd in the gospel, make little or no impression at all upon them: Tho' they hear what the gospel saith and teacheth, yet they are no more affected with it, nor concern'd about it, than as if they had never heard of it, their affections being all bent and inclin'd only to the things of this world. And therefore it is no wonder that they run with fo full a career into fin and wickedness, notwithstanding their profession of the gospel, seeing their natural propenfity and inclination to the things of this world, are fo strong and prevalent within them, that they will not fuffer them to think feriously upon, much less to concern themselves about any thing else.

The apostle, in his epistle to Timothy, Chap. vi. endeavouring to persuade men from the over eager desire of earthly enjoyment, presses this consideration upon us, that such an inordinate desire of the things of this world betrays men into many and great temptations, ver. 8 and q. And then he gives this as the reason of it, ver. 10. For the love of money is the root of all evil; that is, in brief, the love of riches and temporal enjoyments is the great reason why men are guilty of such great and atrocious crimes as generally they are; there being no evil but what springs from this, as from its root and origin; which is so plain atruth, so constantly and universally experienc'd in all ages, that the heaversally experienc'd in all ages, that the heaversally

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thens themselves, the ancient poets and philosophers could not but take notice of it. For Bion the philosopher was wont to fay, that Diragfueia the love of money was nanias unleistones the metropolis of wickedness. And Apollodorus, and γεθόν το το κασάλαιον το κακών έξηκας εν φιλαργιεία, 20 πανί When thou speakest of the love of money, thou mentionest the head of all evils, for they are all contain'd in that. To the same purpose is that of the poet Phocylides, if 5 pixovenus in without no The drains, The love of riches is the mother of all wickedness. What these saw by the light of nature, hath here divine authority stamp'd upon it; God himself afferting the same thing by this apostle. Pila is ravis nanov bair in ora ester. The love of money is the root of all evils; which, that we may the better understand, we must confider,

1. What is here meant by money.

2. What by the love of riches.

3. How the love of money is the root of all evils.

As for the first, I need not insist long upon it, all men knowing well enough what money is. But we must remember, that by money is here understood not only silver and gold, but all earthly comforts, possessions, and enjoyments whatsoever, whether goods, lands, houses, wares, wealth, or riches of any fort or kind whatsoever.

2. By the love of money we are to understand that sin which the scriptures call covetousness; and the true nature and notion of it consistes especially in three things.

1. In having a real esteem and value for wealth

or money, as if it was a thing that could make men happy, or better than otherwise they would be; as it is plain all covetous men have their defire of riches proceeding only from a groundless fancy, that their happiness consists in having much, which makes them set a greater value upon riches, preferring them before other things, even before God himself. Hence the love of money is altogether inconsistent with the love of God, I folm ii. 15. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. It being impossible to love God as we ought, above all things, and yet to love the world too at the same time.

2. Hence the love of money supposeth also a delight and complacency in the having of it, proceeding from the aforesaid esteem they have for it: For being posses'd with a fond opinion, that the more they have the better they are, they cannot but be pleas'd with the thoughts of the present enjoyments, as the rich man was in the gospel, Luke xii. 16, 17, 18, 19. who, because his ground brought forth plentifully, resolv'd to enlarge his barns, and lay up stores for many years, and bid his soul take her ease. How many such sools have we amongst us, who please and pride themselves with the thoughts of their being rich?

3. From this esteem for and complacency in money or wealth, it follows, that men are still desirous of having more, placing their happiness only in riches; because they think they can never be happy enough, therefore they think too they are never rich enough. Hence, how much soever they have, they still desire more,

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and therefore covetousness in scripture is ordinarily express'd by Theoregia, which properly fignifies an inordinate defire of having more; which kind of defires can never be fatisfied, because they are able to defire more than all the world, and to raise themselves as high and as far as the infinite Good it felf. Now, fuch a love of money as this is, confisting in having a real esteem for it, in taking pleasure and delight in it, and in longing and thirsting after it, this is that which the apostle here saith is the root of all evil; that is, it is the great and principal cause of all forts of evil that men are guilty of, or obnoxious to: Which that I may clearly demonstrate to you, we must first know in general, that there are but two forts of evil in the world, the evil of fin, and the evil of punishment or misery; and the love of money is the cause of them both.

To begin with the evil of fin which is the only fountain from whence all other evils flow, and it self doth certainly spring from the love of money, as much or more than from any thing else in the whole world: insomuch, that the greatest part of those fins which any of us are guilty of, proceed from this master-sin, even the love of money, as might easily be shewn from a particular enumeration of those sins which men generally are addicted to. But that I may proceed more clearly and methodically indemonstrating this, so as to convince men of the danger of this above most other sins, I desire it may be consider'd that there are two forts of sins that we are all guilty of, sins of omission and sins of commis-

sion, under which two heads all sins whatso-

ever are comprehended.

First, For fins of omission. It is plain that our love of money is the chief and principal cause that makes us neglect and omit our duties to God and man, as it is manifest we most of us do. In speaking unto which I must take leave to deal plainly, for it is a matter that concerns our eternal falvation; and therefore howfoever fome may refent it, I am bound in duty and conscience to mind men of their fins, and particularly of this great prevailing fin of covetousness, or inordinate love of money, which most men give but too much reason to fear they are guilty of, and therefore I may tell them of it without any breach of charity. It is true, I cannot pretend to be a fearcher of hearts, that is only God's prerogative, and therefore I shall not take upon me to judge or censure any particular persons; but I shall speak to all in general, and leave every one to make the particular application of it to himself. Neither shall I speak of things at random, but I shall instance only in such fins which I can affert upon my own knowledge that most men allow themselves, and that upon this account only, because they love money.

For first, what is the reason that so few, indeed scarce any of us, are at prayers at church upon the week-days, to perform our devotion to him that made us? is it because we think it impertinent to pray unto him? No; our presence there on Sundays contradicts that; and I have more charity than to think that any are so atheistical, as to imagine it to be superstuous to pay our homage to the supreme governor of the world and to implore his aid and blessing upon us? But what then should be the reason of it? In plain terms, it is nothing else but because men love money, and therefore are loth to spare so much time from their shops or callings, as to go to church to pray to God for what they have. Let us search into our own hearts and we shall acknowledge this to be the only reason of it. But it is a very soolish one, for who can bless us but God?

2. What is the reason that so many neglect the sacrament of the Lord's supper? Do not we all look upon it as our duty to receive it? I dare say we do; Christ himself having commanded it, Luke xxii. 19. and it being the only way whereby to manifest our selves to be christians; what then can be the reason of this neglect of it, but merely the love of money, which makes men loth to spend time in preparing and fitting themselves for it?

But seeing men thus excommunicate themfelves by not coming to the communion, in
plain terms, they deserve to be excommunicated
by the censures of the church. And if God
should in his providence deprive them of ever
having an opportunity of receiving the sacrament again, they must even thank themselves
for it. Howsoever this shall be their present
punishment, that they shall be deprived of it,
until they think it worth their while to come
unto it.

3. What is the reason that the Sabbath is so profan'd? That so many take their recreations

upon the Lord's Day; but because they cannot spare time for it from getting money upon other days? thinking the day long, because they can get little in it, as Amos viii. 5. And why do so many profane the sabbath, while at church, by thinking upon the world, but because they

love it? Ezek. xxxiii. 31.

4. What is the reason that charity is so cold, but that the love of money is grown so hot amongst us? For do not we all know it is our duty to relieve the poor? Hath not God expressly commanded it? Hath not he threaten'd a curse to them that do it not, and promis'd a blessing to them that do it? What then can be the reason that so many neglect it, but because they

love their money more than God?

To these might be added many more fins. which the love of money daily occasions. For what is the reason that many read the scriptures fo feldom, and fo curforily as they do? what is the reason that they either have none, or commonly neglect their family duties? That every flight occasion will make them omit their private devotions; that they can find no time to look into their own hearts, to confider their condition and meditate upon God, and Christ, and the world to come? What is the reason that many know their shops better than their hearts and are acquainted with the temper of their body more than with the constitution of their souls? That they are so careful and industrious in the profecution of their worldly defigns, fo negligent and remiss in looking after heaven? What is or can be the reason of these things but that inordi-

nate love and affection they have for money, or the things of this world, which makes them for eager in the pursuit of them, that they forget they have any thing to mind; and fo much taken up with worldly business, that God, and Christ, and Heaven and Soul, and all, must give way to it? Oh the folly and madness of finful men! What a strange, corrupt, and degenerate thing is the heart of man become; that we should be so foolish and unwise, as to prefer our bodies before our fouls, earth before heaven. toys and trifles before the eternal God, the worst of evils before the best of goods, even sin it felf, with all the miseries that attend it, before holiness and that eternal happiness which is promis'd to it! And all for nothing else but the love of a little pelf and trash, which hath no other worth than what our own distracted fancies put upon it.

And if the love of money be the root of formany fins of omission, how many fins of commission must needs sprout from it? Indeed they are so many, that it would be an endless thing to reckon them all up; and therefore I shall not undertake it, but shall mention only such of them, as every one, upon the first reading, shall acknowledge to be the cursed off-spring of this one prolifick sin of covetousness, or the love of money; of which Cicero observes that Nullum est officium tam sanctum atque solenne, quod non avaritia comminuere atque violare soleat. So we may say on the other side too, that there is no sin so great and horrid, but covetousness will

some time put men upon it.

Is idolatry a fin? yea certainly, one of the greatest that any man can be guilty of, and yet nothing can be more plain, than that covetoufness, wherefoever it comes, draws it along with it; infomuch, that every covetous man is afferted by God himself to be an idolater, Eph. v. 5. and covetousness to be idolatry it self, Col. iii. 5. And the reason is plain; for what is idolatry, but to give that worship to a creature which is due only unto God? But what higher acts of worship can we perform to God, than to love him and to trust on him, which it is certain every covetous man gives to his money; and therefore covetousness is here call'd pinagsuela, the love of money. And we cannot but be all fensible what trust and confidence men are wont to repose in their estates and incomes. But such will fay, we do not fall down before our money nor pray unto it; but they trust on it, and that is infinitely more than bare praying to it: and tho' they do not bow down before it in their bodies, yet they make all the faculties of their fouls to bow and stoop unto it; they love and defire it, they rejoyce and delight in having of it, they are griev'd and troubled for nothing fo much as the parting with it, nor fear any thing fo much as the lofing of it.

But they will say again, we do not facrifice to our bags, nor burn incense to our estates; we never did, nor intend to offer so much as a lamb or calf unto it: It is true, they do not, but they offer that which is far better, they offer the poor to it, suffering them to perish with hunger, thirst and cold, rather than relieve them with that ne-

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cessary maintenance which God hath put into their hands for them; they offer their own bodies to it, exposing them to heats and colds, to dangers and hazards both by sea and land, and all for money; yea, they offer their own souls to it likewise, as a whole burnt-offering, giving them to lie scorching in hell-slames to eternity, and that upon no other account but to get money: and tell me which are the greatest fools, and the most odious idolaters, such as offer beasts to the sun and slames, or such as offer themselves, both soul and body, to dirt and clay? we cannot but all acknowledge the latter to be far the worse, and, by consequence, the covetous man to be the greatest idolater in the world, and that too,

only because he is a covetous man.

Moreover, is not extortion and oppression a fin? And yet we all know that it is the love of money that is the only cause of it. Is not strife and contention a fin? Whence comes it but from our lusting after money? James iv. 1. Is not perjury a fin? Is not corruption of justice a fin? Is not cheating and cozenage a fin? Is not pride and haughtiness a sin? Is not unrighteous dealing betwixt man and man a fin? Is not theft and robbery a fin? Is not treason and rebellion a fin? Are not all these fins and great ones too? But whence fpring these poysonous fruits into the lives of men, but from the bitter root of covetousness in their hearts? It is the love of money that makes these fins so rife among us: It is this that makes men forfwear themselves, and cozen others: It is this that oft-times makes fathers ruin their children, and children to long for the death death of their fathers: It is this that makes neighbours go to law, and brethren themselves to be at variance: It is this that makes men strive to over-reach each other, and to blind the eyes of those they deal with: It is this that hath caused some to murder others, and others to destroy themselves. What shall I say more? There is no impiety that can be committed against God, nor injury that can be offer'd unto men, but the love of money hath been the cause of it in others, and will be so in us, unless it be timely prevented; and therefore it may well be term'd the root of all evil of sin.

And it being the root from whence all the evil of fin springs, it must needs be the root of the evil of punishment and misery too; misery and punishment being the necessary consequents of fin. Indeed this fin carries its mifery along with it, as Seneca himself saw by the mere light of nature, faying, Nulla avaritia fine pæna eft, quamvis satis sit ipsa pænarum, No avarice is without punishment, tho' it be it self punishment enough. For what a torment is it for a man to be always thirsty, and never able to quench his thirst? Yet this is the misery of every covetous man, whose thirst after money can never be satisfied, and who is fo defirous of having more, that he can never enjoy with comfort what he hath; loving money fo well, that he grudgeth himself the use of it. Hence the aforesaid author observ'd, that in nullum avarus bonus est, in seipsum pessimus, The covetous man is good to none, but worst of all to himself. And as this is the natural confequent of this fin in it felf, fo is it the ordinary punishment that God inflicts upon men for it, not suffering them to take any pleasure in the use of what they love, Ecclestivi. 1, 2. And besides that, what cares and sears, what labours and travels, what dangers and hazards, doth the love of money put men upon? How do they rack their brains, and break their rest to get it; and when it is gotten, what sears are they always in, lest they should lose it again? What grief and trouble do the poor wretches undergo for every petty loss that besals them? So that every covetous man is not only miserable, but therefore miserable, because covetous.

But if their misery be so great in this life, how great will it be in that to come? Concerning which there are too things to be observed: first, that the very having of riches makes it very dissicult to get to heaven, Matt. xix. 23, 24, 25. Luke xvi. 19, 22. Hence Agar was afraid of them, Prov. xxx. 8. Neither do we ever read of any of the patriarchs, prophets, or the saints recorded in scripture, to have been guilty of this sin, unless Baruch, who is reproved for it, Jer. xlv. 5.

And as the having of money makes it difficult to get to heaven, so the loving of it makes it impossible to keep out of hell: for so long as a man is coverous, he is liable to every temptation, ready to catch at every bait that the devil throws before him; so that he is led by him as he pleaseth, till at length he be utterly destroy'd, I Tim. vi. 9. And therefore the same apostle elsewhere tells us, that the coverous have no inheritance in

the kingdom of God, but the wrath of God will most certainly fall upon them, Eph. v. 5, 6. But the wrath of God is the greatest evil of punishment that it is possible for men to bear: indeed, it is that which being once incens'd makes hell-fire. And yet we see that the heat of our love to money will enkindle the slames of God's wrath against us, yea, and such slames too as will never be quench'd, Mark ix. 44. And so, for the little seeming transient pleasure they take in getting, or keeping money now, they must live in misery and contempt, in shame and torment for evermore.

Thus now we fee that the love of money will not only put us upon the evil of fin, but it will also bring the evil of punishment upon us; both which the apostle here, ver. 9, 10. imputes to this fin. And therefore he both well may and must be understood of both these forts of evil, when he faith, that the love of money is the root of all evil; which, the premises consider'd, I hope none can deny. And need I then heap up more arguments to persuade men from this sin, and to prevail with them to leave doting upon the world and loving money? Is not this one argument of it self sufficient? For is it possible for us to indulge our felves in this fin, now we know it is the root of all evil? And that if we still love money, there is no fin fo great but we may fall into it, and no mifery so heavy but it will fall upon us. Surely, if this confideration will not prevail upon us to despise and contemn, rather than to love and defire this world, for my part I know not what can. Only this I know, that fo long

as men continue in this fin, all writing and preaching will be in vain to them; and fo will their hearing be, their going to church, their reading the scriptures, their hearing them read and expounded to them; all this will fignify nothing, this root of all evil is still within us, and it will bring forth its bitter fruit, do what we can. And therefore as ever we defire to profit by what we hear, as ever we defire to avoid any one fin whatfoever, to know what happiest means to escape either present torment or eternal misery, as ever we desire to be real saints, and to manifest our selves to be so, to go to heaven, and live with God and Christ for ever, let not our affections be entangled any longer in the briars and thorns of this lower world, let us beware of loving money: if riches increase, let us not set our hearts upon them, Pfal. lxii. 10, but fcorn and despise them, hereafter, as much as ever heretofore we have defir'd or lov'd them.

But I cannot, I dare not but in charity believe and hope, that by this time my readers are something wean'd from their doting upon this present world, and defire to know how they may for the future get off their affections from it, so as to have this root of all evil extirpated, and quite pluck'd up from within them. I hope this is now the defire of all, or at least of most of them; and therefore I shall now endeavour to shew them how they may infallibly accomplish and effect it.

In order thereto,

1. Let such persons often consider with themfelves, how unfuitable the things of this world are for the affection of love, which was defign'd

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only for the chiefest Good. When God implanted the affection of love within us, he did not intend it should be the root of all evil, but of all good unto us; and therefore he dld not give it us to place it fondly upon such low and mean objects as this world prefents unto us, but that we should love himself with all our hearts and fouls, Deut. vi. 5. And furely he infinitely deferves our love more than fuch trash can do.

2. Let them remember that so long as they love money, they may pretend what they please, they do not love God, i John ii. 15. nor Christ, Matt. x. 37. Luke xiv. 26. and, by consequence, they have no true religion at all in 'em, Jam. i. 27.

3. Let them often read and study our Saviour's fermon upon the mount, where he pronounces the meek and low, not the rich and mighty, to be bleffed, Matth. v. 3, 4. And weigh those strong and undeniable arguments which he brings, to prevail upon us not to take thought for the world, nor trouble our heads about the impertinent concerns of this transient life, Mat. vi. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28.

4. Let them labour to confirm and strengthen their trust and confidence on the promises of God, who hath affur'dus, that if we love and fear him, he will take care of us, and provide all things necessary for us, Mat. vi. 33. This is the great argument which the apostle uses, Heb. xiii. 5, 6.

5. Let them remember that they are call'd to higher things than this world is able to afford them: the christian is an high and heavenly calling; we are call'd by it, and invited to a kingdom and eternal glory, I Theff.ii. 12. And there-H 2

fore ought not to fpend our time about fuch low

and paultry trash as riches and wealth.

6. Let them get above the world, let their conversation be in heaven, and then they will soon look down upon all things here below as beneath their concern, Vilescunt temporalia, cum desiderantur æterna, saith St. Gregory. He that seriously thinks upon and desires heaven, cannot but vilify and despise earth. Oh what sools and madmen do the blessed angels and the gloristed saints in heaven think us poor mortals upon earth to be, when they see us busying our selves about getting a little resin'd dirt, and in the mean while neglecting those transcendent glories which themselves enjoy, altho' they be offer'd to us!

7. Let them never suffer the vanity of all things here below to go out of their minds; but remember still, that get what they can, it is but vanity and vexation of spirit, as Solomon himself afferted upon his own experience, tho' he, be sure, had more than any of us are ever likely to enjoy. And let them not only often repeat the words, but endeavour to get themselves convinc'd throughly of the truth of them, which their own experiences, if duly weigh'd and

rightly apply'd, will foon do.

8. Let it be their daily prayer to Almighty God, that he would take off their affections from the world, and incline them to himself, as David did, saying, Incline my heart to thy testimonies, and not to covetousness, Psal. cxix. 36.

To all these means let them add the constant and serious consideration of what they have here read, read, that the love of money is the root of all evil; affuring themselves, that if they will not believe it now, it is not long before they will all find it but too true, by their own sad and woful experience; when they shall be stripp'd of their present enjoyments, and so turn bankrupts to another world, where they will be cast into prison without ever having a farthing to relieve themselves, or so much as a drop of wa-

ter to cool their enflam'd tongues.

By these and such like means none of us but may suppress the love of money in us, which is the root of all evil, and so avoid or prevent all the evil which otherwise will proceed from it. Whether any of my readers will be perfuaded to use these means or no, I know not; however, let me tell them, that if they are loath to strive to get their affections deaden'd to the world, it is an infallible fign that they are too much in love with it, and that this root and feed of all manner of evil remains in them; nor can it be expected they will be perfuaded to any one duty whatfoever, until they are first prevailed upon to do this, even to mortify their lusts and affections to the things of this world: for fo long as those are predominant with us, no grace whatsoever can be exerted, nor duty perform'd nor any fin avoided by us.

But oh how happy would it be, if it should please the most high God to set what I have here said so home upon any, as to induce them to set themselves seriously, for the future, to the eradicating or rooting up this love of money out of their hearts! What a holy, what a blessed,

what a peculiar people should we then be, and how zealous of good works! then we should take all opportunities of performing our devotions to Almighty God; then we should have as many at the facrament, as at a fermon; then our churches would be fill'd all the week, as well as on Sundays, and the eternal God constantly worshipp'd with reverence and godly fear; then we should take delight in cloathing the naked, feeding the hungry, and relieving the oppressed: then there would be no fuch thing as cheating and cozenage, as lying and perjury, as strife and contention amongst us. But we should all walk hand in hand together in the ways of piety, justice, and charity, upon earth, until at length we shall come to heaven, where we shall be so far from loving or defiring money, that we shall account it as it is, even drofs and dirt; where our affections shall be wholly taken up with the contemplation of the chiefest Good, and we shall solace our selves in the enjoyment of his perfections for evermore.

#### THOUGHTS

UPON

### Worldly Riches.

SECT. II.



IMOTHY, after his conversion to the christian faith, being found to be a man of great parts, learning and piety, and

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fo every way qualified for the work of the mystery, St. Paul, who had planted a church at Ephesus, the Metropolis or chief city of all Asia, left him to dress and propagate it, giving him power to ordain elders or priests, and to visit and exercise jurisdiction over them, to see they did not teach false doctrines, 1 Tim. i. 3. that they be unblameable in their lives and conversations, 1 Tim. v. 7, and to exercise authority over them, in case they be otherwise, I Tim. v. 19. And therefore it cannot in reason but be acknowledg'd that Timothy was the bishop, fuperintendant, or visiter, of all the Asian churches, as he was always afferted to have been by the fathers of the primitive church, as Eusebius reports, faying, Τιμόθε Ττις εν Έρεσω παecinias isoge) πρώτω την εποκοπίν εληχέναι, that Timothy is reported to have been the first bishop of the province of Ephefus. Be fure, he had the overfight of all the churches that were planted there, and not only in Ephefus it felf, but likewife in all Afia, which was subject then to his ecclefiaftical power and jurisdiction.

And hence it is that the apostle St. Paul, in his first epistle to him, gives him directions how to manage so great a work, and to discharge so great a trust as was committed to him, both as bishop and priest; both how to ordain and govern others, and likewise how to preach himself the gospel of Christ. And having spent the whole epistle in directions of this sort, in the close of it, as it were at the foot of the epistle he subjoins one general caution to be constantly observed by him; Charge them that are rich,

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&c. Which words, tho' first directed to Timothy. were in him intended for all fucceeding ministers and preachers of the gospel; such, I mean, who are folemnly ordain'd and fet apart for this work. We are all oblig'd to observe the command which is here laid upon us, as without which we are never likely to do any good upon them that hear us: for folong as their minds are fet altogether upon riches and the things of this world, we may preach our hearts out before we can ever perfuade them to mind heaven and eternal happiness in good earnest. This St. Paul knew well enough, and therefore hath left this, not only as his advice and council, but as a frict command and duty incumbent upon the preachers of the gospel in all ages, that they charge them that are rich, &c. Where it may be observ'd, in the first place, how we are expresly enjoin'd to charge them that are rich, &c. a word much to be observ'd, the apostle doth not fay, defire, befeech, counsel, or admonish the rich, but agy sexxe rois manoion, charge and command them that are rich. The word properly fignifies such a charge as the judges at an affize or fessions make in the king's name, enjoining his subjects to observe the establish'd laws and statutes of the kingdom: and fo the word is always used in scripture for the strictest way of commanding any thing to be observ'd or done, as Acts v. 28. ¿ wapny service ragnsy whank upir, did not we straitly command you? Luke v. 14. Then Tyeshe aut, He charged them to tell no man. Thus therefore it is, that we are here enjoin'd to charge the rich, in the name of the king of kings, not to be highminded.

minded, nor to trust in uncertain riches, &c. And this is the proper notion, and the only true way of preaching the word of God; which therefore in scripture is ordinarily express'd by the word ungulary, which properly fignifies, to publish or proclaim, as heralds do, the will and pleasure of the prince, and, in his name, to command the people to observe it. Thus we are enjoin'd to preach the word of God, by publishing his will and pleasure to men, charging them, in his name, to obey and practife it. For we come not to them in our names, but in his that created and redeem'd them; and therefore. altho' we neither have, nor pretend to any power or authority over them, from our felves; yet, by virtue of the commission which we have receiv'd from the universal and supreme Monarch of the world, we not only lawfully may, but are in duty bound to charge and enjoin all, in his name, to observe what he hath command-Infomuch, that altho' we pretend ed them. not to divine inspiration, or immediate revelations from God, fuch as the prophets had; yet we, preaching the same word which they did, may, and often ought to use the same authority which they used, faying, as they did, Thus saith the Lord of hosts. For whatsoever is written in the scriptures, is as certainly God's word now, as it was when first inspir'd or reveal'd to them. And therefore it cannot be denied, but that we have as much power to charge upon all, the obfervation of what is there written, as they ever had, we being fent to preach and proclaim the will of God unto all by the same person as they were. were. Hence it is that the apostle, in the name of God, commands Titus, and in him all succeeding ministers of the gospel, to speak or preach the word of God, to exhort and rebuke with all authority, Tit. ii. 15. From whence nothing can be more plain, than that it is our duty to preach with authority, as those who have receiv'd power from God, to make known his will and pleasure to all men; or, as the apostle here expressly words it, to charge them not to

be high-minded, and the like.

But this I fear may be a very ungrateful fubject to many, and therefore I should not have infifted fo long upon it, but that there is a kind of necessity for it. For I verily believe, that the non-observance of this, hath been, and still is, the principal reason why people receive so little benefit by hearing of fermons, as they ufually do. For they look upon fermons only as popular discourses, rehears'd by one of their fellowcreatures, which they may censure, approve, or reject, as themselves see good. And we our felves, I fear, have been too faulty, or at least remiss, in this particular, in that when we preach, we ordinarily make a long harangue, or oration, concerning fome point in polemical, dogmatical, or practical divinity, and use only some moral persuasions to press upon our auditors the observance of what we fay, without interposing or exercifing the authority which is committed to. us, so as to charge them, in the name of the most high God, to observe and practise what we declare and prove unto them to be his will, and, by consequence, their duty. But, for my own part, part, did I think that preaching confifted only in explaining some point in divinity, and using only moral arguments to perfuade men to perform their duty to God and man, I should not think it worth my while to do it, because I could not expect to do any good at all by it: for all the moral arguments in the world can never be fo strong to draw us from fin, as our own natural corruptions are to drive us into it. And therefore we can never expect to do any good upon men, either by our logick or rhetorick; but our arguments must be fetch'd from on high, even from the eternal God himself, or else they are never likely to profit or prevail upon them. We must charge and command them in God's name, or else we had as good say nothing.

It is true, did we, who preach God's word, propose nothing else to our selves, but to tickle mens ears, and please their fancies, and so to ingratiate our felves into their love and favour, it would be easy to entertain them with discourses of another nature, stuff'd with such fine words, quaint phrases, and high notions, as would be very pleasing and acceptable unto them: but I must take leave to say, that we dare not do it; for we know, that as our auditors must give an account of their hearing, so it is not long before we also must give an account of our preaching too; for fo God himself hath told us before-hand by his apostle, Heb. xiii. 17. But how shall we be able to look the eternal God in the face, yea, to look our auditors in the face at that time, if, instead of charging their duty upon them, in order to their eternal salvation, we should put them off with general discourses, which signify nothing, only to please and gratify them whilst we remain with them; no, we dare not do it, and therefore I wish men would not expect it from us; for we must not hazard our own eternal salvation, to gain their temporal savour or applause. And therefore, seeing, God hath been pleas'd to entrust us so far with mens souls, as to direct them in the way to eternal life, how-soever they resent it, we are bound in duty, both to God; to them, and our selves, to deal plainly with them, and to use the authority which he hath here committed to us, where he hath expressly commanded us, in his name, to charge

them that are rich in this world, &c.

Where I defire the reader to observe, in the next place, that we of the clergy are not only empower'd to charge the poorer or meaner fort of people, who, by reason of their extream poverty and want, may seem inferior to us, but even rich men too; charge them, saith the apostle, that are rich in this world. And the reason is, because we come unto them in his name who gives them all the riches they do enjoy, and can take them away again when he himself pleaseth; so that he can make the poor rich, and the rich poor, when he pleaseth; and therefore the poor and the rich are all alike to him; his power and authority is the same over both; and therefore we, coming in his name, are order'd to make no distinction, but to charge the one as well as the other; yea, here we are particularly commanded to charge them that are rich.

Which

Which is the next thing to be confider'd in these words, even whom the apostle means by them that are rich in this world? Which is a question that needs a serious resolution. For many men, not thinking themselves as yet to be rich enough, will be apt to conclude from thence that they are not to be reckon'd amongst those whom the apostle here calls rich in this world. But whatfoever they think of themselves, I believe there are but few, except the very poor, who, in a scripture sense, are not rich men. For whatfoever any have over and above their necesfary maintenance, that the scriptures call riches, as is plain from Agar's wish, Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me, Prov. xxx. 8. From whence it is eafy to observe, that as nothing but the want of convenient food is poverty, so what soever a man hath over and above his convenient or necessary food, is properly his riches; and so he that hath it, is, in a scripture sense, a rich man, who is therefore call'd here in my text wason quafi wodusto, one that hath much fubstance, or more than he hath necessary occasion for. And therefore, altho' fome may be richer than others, yet I believe the generality may be justly reckon'd in the number of the rich men here spoken of, at least all, fuch as, by the bleffing of God, have not only what is necessary for their present maintenance, but likewise something to spare, and so may all come under the notion of those whom we are commanded to charge not to be high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, &c.

Having thus confider'd the act which we are

here

here commanded to exert, and the object, the rich of this world, we are now to confider the subject matter, what that is which we are here commanded to charge upon them; but that is here expressly set down in several particulars, all which I shall endeavour to explain as they lie in order.

First, That they be not high-minded. A necessary caution for rich men: for riches are very apt to puff men up with vain and foolish conceits of themselves, so as to think themselves to be so much better, by how much they are richer than other people; but this is a grand mistake, which we are here enjoin'd to use the utmost of our power and skill to rectify, by charging them that are rich not to be high-minded; that is, not to think highly and proudly of themselves, because they are richer or wealthier than other men, but to be every way as humble in their own eyes, and as lowly minded in the enjoyment of all temporal blessings, as if they enjoy'd nothing; as considering,

I. How much foever they have, they are no

way really the better for it.

1. Not in their fouls; they are never the wifer nor holier, nor more acceptable unto God by their being rich, *Eccl.* ix. 1. Job xxxiv. 19.

2. Not in their bodies; they are never the stronger, nor healthier, nor freer from pain and

trouble, nor yet longer liv'd than others.

3. Nor in their minds; their consciences are never the quieter, their hearts never the freer from cares and fears, neither can they sleep better than other people, *Eccl.* v. 12.

4. Nor

4. Nor yet in their estate and condition.

(1.) Not in this life: for riches can never fatisfy them, nor, by consequence, make them happy; but they may still be as miserable in the enjoyment, as in the want of all things, Eccles.

(2.) Nor yet in the life to come; they are never the nearer heaven, by being higher upon earth; their gold and filver can never purchase an inheritance for them in the land of Canaan,

Fames ii. 5.

II. They are so far from being better, that they are rather much worse for their having

abundance here below.

1. They have more temptations to fin, to luxury, to covetousness, to the love of this world, to the neglect of their duty to God, to pride and self-conceitedness, to security and presumption,

Luke xiii. 19.

than it is for others; and, by consequence, the richer they are, the more danger they are in of being miserable for ever, Matt. xix. 23. Whence our Saviour himself denounceth a woe upon them that are rich, Luke vi. 24. and St. James bids them weep and howl for their miseries, Jam. v. 1. And therefore advises us to rejoyce rather at poverty than riches, Jac. i. 9, 10. Now these things being consider'd, as spoken by God himself, none can deny but that the rich are most certainly in a worse condition than the poor; and, by consequence, that men have no cause to be proud, or high-minded, nor to glory in their riches, Jer. ix. 23. And therefore what-

foever outward bleffings God hath bestow'd upon us, Let us not be high-minded, but fear, Rom. xi. 20.

Secondly, Nor to trust in uncertain riches, which, I confess, is a very hard lesson for a rich man to learn, nothing being more difficult than to have riches and not to trust in them, as our Saviour himself intimates, in explaining the one by the other, as things very rarely sever'd, Mark x. 23, 24. But certainly it is altogether as foolish a thing to trust in riches, as it is to be

proud of them. For,

1. They of themselves can stand us in no stead; they cannot defend us from any evil, nor procure us any good; they cannot of themselves either feed us, or cloath us, or refresh us, or be any ways advantageous to us, without God's blessing, Prov. xi. 4. How much less can they be able to deliver us from wrath to come? no, we may take it for a certain truth, our riches may much surther our eternal misery, but they can never conduce any thing to our future happiness.

2. If we trust in them, be sure they'll fail us, and bring us into misery and desolation; for to trust in any thing but God, is certainly one of the highest sins we can be guilty of, it is, in plain terms, idolatry; and therefore, be that trusteth in riches, is sure to fall, Prov. xi. 28. For this

is to deny God, Job xxxi. 24, 25, 28.

3. They are but uncertain riches, they make themselves wings and fly away, Prov. xxiii. 5. They are in continual motion, ebbing and flowing, and never continuing in one stay; so that

t00,

you are never fure of keeping them one day. And what reason then can we have to trust on them? especially, confidering that they are not only uncertain, but uncertainty it felf, as the word here fignifies, Trust not in the uncertainty of riches; but in the living God: he, he is to be the only object of our trust, whether we have or have not any thing else to trust on; or, to fpeak more properly, there is nothing that we can upon good grounds make our trust and confidence, but only him, who governs and disposes of all things according to his own pleasure: so that it is he, and he alone, that giveth us all things richly to enjoy. It is not our wit or policy, it is not our strength or industry, it is not our trading and trafficking in the world, it is none but God that giveth us what we have, Deut. viii. 18. Prov. x. 22. And as it is he that maketh men rich, fo he can make them poor again, when he himself pleaseth; and they have cause to fear he will do fo too, unless they observe what is here charg'd upon them.

There are four duties still behind, which we are here commanded to charge all those who are

rich to observe.

I. That they do good. In treating of which, I might shew the several qualifications requir'd to the making up of an action good; as, that the matter of it must be good, as commanded, or, at least, allow'd by God; that the manner of performing it be good, as that it be done obediently, understandingly, willingly, chearfully, humbly, and sincerely; and that the end be good

too, so as that it be directed ultimately to the glory of God. But not to insist upon that now, I shall only consider what kind of good works the rich are here commanded to do, as they are rich men: and they are two, works of piety,

and works of charity.

1. They are here commanded to do works of piety; where, by works of piety, I mean not their loving, and fearing, and honouring of God, nor yet their praying to him, their hearing his word, or praising his name; for such works of piety as these are, the poorest as well as the richest persons amongst us are bound to do: whereas the apostle here speaks only of such works as they who are rich are bound to do, upon that account, because they are so. And therefore by works of piety here, I understand such works as tend to the honour of his name, to the performance of worship and homage to him, to the encouragement of his ministers, the propagating of his gospel, and the conversion of sinners to him; all which they are bound to do, to the utmost of their power, out of the estates which for these purposes he hath entrusted with them. For thus they are expresly commanded, to honour the Lord with all their substance or riches, and with the first-fruits of all their increase, Prov. iii. 9. And the reason is, because God is the universal proprietor, the head landlord of all the world, and we have nothing but what we hold under him; neither are we any more than tenants at will to him, who may fine us at his own pleafure, or throw us out of poffession whenfoever he fees good. Now, left we should for-

get this, even upon what tenure it is that we hold our estates, God hath enjoyn'd us to pay him, as it were, a quit-rent, or tribute out of what we possess, as an acknowledgment that it is by his favour and bleffing alone that we do pofsess it: So that whatsoever we do, or are able to offer to him, is but a due debt which we owe him; which, if we neglect to pay him, we lofe our tenure, and forfeit what we have to the lord of the manour, the supreme possessor of the world. Hence it is, that in all ages, they who were truly pious, and had a due sense of God upon their hearts, were always very careful to pay this their homage unto God; infomuch that many of them never thought they could give enough to any pious use, wherein to testify their acknowledgment of God's dominion over them, and his right and propriety in what they had. A notable instance whereof we have in the children of Israel; for when the tabernacle was to be built for the service and worship of God, they were fo far from being backward in contributing towards it, that they presently brought more than could be used in the building of it, Exod. xxxvi. 5, 6, 7. So it was too in the building of the temple, which David, and the cheifs or nobles of I/rael, made great preparations for, I Chron. xxix. 6, 7, 8. And that they did this, thereby to acknowledge God to be the Lord and giver of all, is plain from the following words, ver. 11, 12, 13. The same was also observ'd in the building of the second temple, as the raifing the first out of its rubbish, wherein it had lain for many years. And as for christians,

stians, I need not tell you how forward those who have been truly pious, have always been in doing fuch works of piety, feeing most of the churches in Christendom, or, be sure, in this nation have been erected by particular persons. And it is very observable, that the more eminent any place or age hath been for piety and devotion, the more pious works have been always done in it for the service and worship of Almighty God; which plainly shews, that where suchworks are wanting, whatfoever pretences they may make, there is no fuch thing as true piety, and the fear of God. And therefore, as ever we defire to manifest our selves to be what we profess, true christians indeed, men fearing God, and hating covetousness, we must take all opportunities to express our thankfulness unto God for what we have, by devoting as much as we can of it to his fervice and honour.

2. Besides these works of piety towards God, the rich are enjoyn'd also works of charity towards the poor; which, tho' they have an immediate reference to the poor, yet God looks upon them as given to himself, Prov. xiv. 31. Chap. xix. 17. Matt. xxv. 40. Hence it is that God accepts of fuch works as these also for part of the tribute which we owe him; whereby we acknowledge the receipt of what we have from him, and express our thankfulness unto him for it, without which we have no ground to expect a bleffing upon what we have, nor that it should be really good to us. For, as the apostle tells us, every creature of God is good, if it be receiv'd with thanksgiving, not else, 1 Tim. iv. 4. But no thanksgiving is acceptable

ceptable, but that which is express'd by works as well as words. And therefore it is necessary for us to pay this duty and fervice to God out of what we have, in order to the cleanfing and fanctifying the refidue of our estates unto us, without which we have not the lawful use of what we posses; but every thing we have is polluted and unclean to us, as our Saviour himself intimates, Luke xi, 41. A thing much to be confider'd: For I verily believe that the great reason why so many estates are blasted so soon, and brought to nothing amongst us, is because men do not render unto God his duty and tribute out of what they have; and therefore it is no wonder that God, in his providence, turns them out of poffession, and gives their estates to other persons, who shall be better tenants to him, and be careful to pay him the duties which he requires of them. And therefore, in order to mens fecuring their estates to themselves and posterity, it is absolute necessary that they observe the duty which we are here recommended to charge upon all that are rich in this world, even to do good with what they have; and not only fo, but,

II. To be rich too in good works; that is, not only to do good, but to do as much good as they are able with their riches, so as to proportion their good works to the riches which God hath given them wherewith to do them, according to the apostle's direction, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Thus, in the place before quoted, Luke xi. 41. Where our Saviour bids the pharisees to give alms of such things as they have, his words are, the crowled store things as they have, his words are, the crowled store able;

for fo the words properly fignify. And, verily, whatfoever we do, unless it be as much as we can, God will not look upon us as doing any thing at all: for we must not think to compound with him. When he hath given us all we have, he expects that we render all that he requires of us, that is, as much as we are able to pay unto him. As if a man owes you money, you will not accept of part instead of the whole; so neither will God from us; we all owe him as much as we are able to devote to his fervice and honour, and we must not think to put him off with part of it: For he reckons that he receives nothing from us, unless it be proportionable to what he hath bestow'd upon us: but how little foever it is that we give or offer to him, if it be but answerable to our estates, it will be accepted by him. This our Saviour himself hath asfur'd us of, Mark xii. 43. From whence we may certainly conclude, that there is not the poorest person whatsoever, but may be as rich in good works as the richeft; because God doth not meafure the goodness of our works by their bulk or quantity, but by the proportion which they bear to our estates: so that he that gives a penny, may do as good a work as he that gives a pound, yea, and a better too; because his may be as much as he is able, whereas the others is not. I wish all men would feriously weigh and consider this, lest otherwise they go out of the world without ever having done one good work in it: for we may affure our felves, he that is not thus rich in good works doth no good at all with his riches.

But it is farther to be consider'd here, that this expression,

expression, rich in good works, implies, that good works are indeed our principal riches, and men must not compute their riches so much from what they have, as from what they give and devote to God. For what we have is not ours, but God's in our hands; but what we give is ours in God's hands; and he acknowledgeth himself our debtor for it, in that he tells us, that we lend it to him, and promifeth to pay it us again, Prov. xix. 17. And therefore they who cast up their accompts, to know how rich they are, ought not to reckon upon what they have lying by them, nor upon their houses and lands that are made over to them, nor yet upon what is owing to them by men; but should reckon only upon what they have given to pious or charitable uses, upon what treasure they have laid up in heaven. For whatsoever they may think at present, I dare affure them, that will be found to be their only riches another day. And therefore, if any one defires to be rich indeed, let him take my advice do what good he can with the riches he hath, and then he will be rich enough: for this is the way to be rich in good works. But in order unto that, he must likewise observe what follows, to be,

III. Ready to distribute; that is, ready upon all occasions to pay his tribute unto God, whenfoever, he in his providence, calls for it; taking all opportunities of doing good, and glad
when he can find them, Gal. vi. 10, thus, therefore, when foever any opportunities present
themselves of expressing our thankfulness unto
God, by works either of piety or charity, whatfoever other businesses may be neglected, we

must be sure to lay hold on that. For I dare fay, that there is none but will grant me, that there is all the reason in the world that God should be serv'd in the first place, and that he should have the first fruits of all our increase, Prov. iii. 9. Exod. xxiii. 19. Deut. xxvi. 2. And therefore we cannot but acknowledge, that works of piety towards God, and of charity to the poor, or, as the scripture calls them in general, good works, are always to be done in the first place; and whatsoever other works may be omitted, be fure they must not. But we ought still to be as ready to pay our duties unto God, as we are to receive any thing from him; as ready to give as to receive; and, by consequence, as men let no opportunities slip wherein they can encrease their estates, they are much less to let any opportunities pass wherein they can any way improve their estates for God's glory and others good; but they ought to be ready upon all occasions to distribute what they can upon charitable and pious uses.

IV. Willing to communicate; as we must do it with a ready hand, so we must do it with a willing heart too. Thus we are enjoin'd to serve God willingly, I Chron. xxvii. 9. and chearfully, I Cor. ix. 6, 7. Indeed, God accepts of none but free-will offerings. If we be not as willing to do good works as we are to have wherewith to do them, we may be consident God will never accept of them. And therefore, in plain terms, if any would be rich in good works as becometh christians, and as it is our interest to be, they must not stay till they be compell'd,

perfuaded,

persuaded, or entreated by others to do them; but they must set upon them of their own accord, out of pure obedience unto God, and from a due sense of their constant dependance upon him, and manifold obligations to him; yea, so as to take pleasure in nothing in the world so much as in paying their respects and service to Almighty God, 1 Chron. xxix. 14, 15, 17.

Now, to encourage the rich to employ their estates thus in doing good, the apostle adds, in the last place, that this is the way to lay up for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. A strange expression! yea, such a one that had not St. Paul himself spoke it, some would have been apt to have excepted against it for an error or mistake. What! good works the soundation of eternal life? no, that is not the meaning of it; but that good works are the soundation of that blessed sentence, which they shall receive who are made partakers of eternal life, as is plain from our Saviour's own words, Matth. xxv. 34, 35, 36.

And, verily, altho' there be no such intrinsick value in good works, whereby they that do them can merit any thing from God by their doing of them, yet nothing can be more certain, than that God, of his infinite mercy in Jesus Christ, will so accept of them, as to reward us for them in the world to come. For this our Saviour himself doth clearly intimate to us in the place before quoted, as also Matt. vi. 2c. Luke xii. 33. Luke xvi. 9. that is, distribute and employ the unrighteous or deceitful riches you have in this

this world, in fuch a way as is most pleasing and acceptable unto God, that so he may be your friend, and receive you into everlasting habitations, when these transient and unstable riches fail you. From whence I beg leave to observe, that to do good with what we have, is the only way whereby to improve our estates for our own good, fo as to be the better for them both in this, and also in the world to come. The Rabbins have a good faying, that מכח ממין צרקה good works are the falt of riches, that which preserves them from corruptions, and makes them favoury and acceptable unto God, as also useful and profitable to the owners. Unless we do good with our estates, we forfeit our title to them, by the non-payment of the rent-charge which God hath referv'd to himself upon them; and therefore we may justly expect every moment to be cast out of possession; or, howsoever, tho' he may forbear us a while, yea, fo long as we are in this world, what good, what benefit, what comfort shall we have of our estates in the world to come? certainly, no more than the rich man in the Gospel had, when he lay scorching in hell-fire, and had not fo much as a drop of water to cool his enflam'd tongue. Whereas, on the other fide, if we do good with our estates, if we devote them to the fervice of God, and to the relief of the poor, by this means we shall not only fecure the possession of them to our selves here, but shall also receive comfort and benefit from them in the world to come; fo that our estates will not die with us, but we shall receive benefit by them, and have cause to bless God for

for them unto all eternity: the apostle himself assuring us, that by this means we shall lay up for our selves a good foundation for the time to

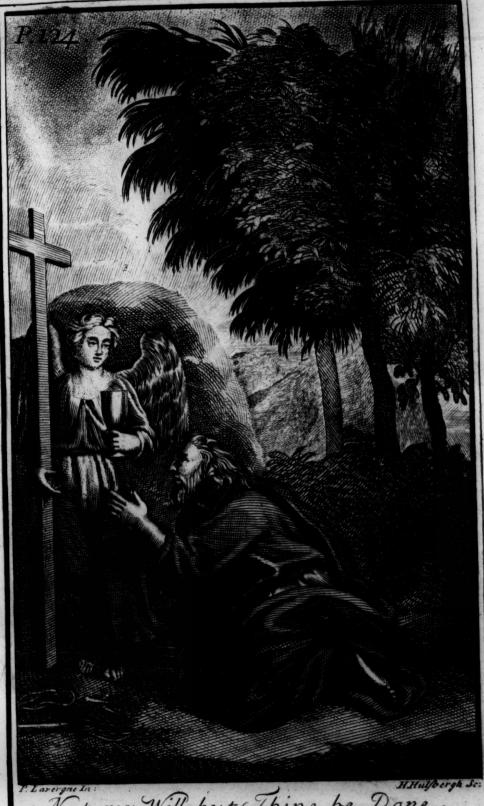
come, so as to lay hold on eternal life.

This one argument being duly weigh'd, I hope I need not use any more to persuade men to do good with what they have, and to make the best use of it they can. For I know I write to christians, at least to such as profess themselves to be fo; and therefore to fuch as believe there is another world besides this we live in, and, by consequence, that it concerns them to provide for that, which, as I have shewn, we may do in a plentiful manner, by the right improvement of what God hath entrusted with us in this world. What then do the generality of men mean, to be fo flack and remifs in laying hold on all opportunities of doing good! what, do they think it possible to lose any thing they do for God! or do they think it possible to employ their estates better than for his fervice and honour who gave them to us! I cannot believe any think fo; and therefore must needs advise the rich again and again, not to lay up their talent in a napkin, but to use their estates to the best advantage for God and their own fouls, that fo when they go from hence into the other world, they may be receiv'd into eternal glory, with a well done, good and faithful servants, enter you into your Master's 10y.

But fearing lest these moral persuasions may not prevail so much upon my readers as I desire they might, they must give me leave farther to tell them, that I am here commanded to charge them that are rich in this world, to be rich also in good works: and therefore feeing, as I have Thewn, there are few but who, in a scripture fense, are rich in this world, in obedience to this command which here is laid upon me, in the name of the most high God, I charge you, and not I only, but the eternal God himself; he wills and requires all those whom he hath bless'd with riches in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches; but that they put their whole trust and confidence only in the living God, whose all things are, and who gives us whatfoever we have: that they do good with what he hath put into their hands, laying it out upon works of piety towards him, and of charity to the poor; that his worship may be decently perform'd, and the poor liberally reliev'd; that they be rich in good works, striving to excel each other in doing good in their generation; that they be ready every moment to distribute, and always willing to communicate to every good work, wherein they can pay their homage and express their thankfulness to him for what they have.

## T H O U G H T S UPON SELF-DENTAL.

HE most glorious sight questionless, that was ever to be seen upon the face of the earth, was to see the Son of God here; to see the supreme being and governour of the



Not my Will but Thine be Done.



Mar Bar of La

the world here, to fee the Creator of all things converfing here with his own creatures; to fee God himself, with the nature and in the shape of man, walking about upon the furface of the earth, and discoursing with filly mortals here, and that with fo much majesty and humility mix'd together, that every expression might seem a demonstration that he was both God and man. It is true we were not fo happy as to fee this bleffed fight; howfoever, it is our happiness that we have heard of it, and have it fo exactly describ'd to us, that we may as clearly apprehend it as if we had feen it: yea, our Saviour himself hath pronounc'd those in a peculiar manner bleffed, who have not feen, and yet have believ'd, John xx. 29, that is, who never faw Christ in the manger, nor in the temple; who never faw him prostrate before his Father in the garden, not fasten'd by men unto his cross; who never faw him preaching the Gospel, nor working miracles to confirm it; who never faw him before his passion, nor after his resurrection, and yet do as firmly believe whatfoever is recorded of him, as if they had feen it with their eyes. Such persons our blessed Saviour asserts to be truly bleffed, as having such a faith as in the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1.

Hence therefore, altho' we liv'd not in our Saviour's time, and therefore faw him not do as never man did, nor heard him spake as never man spake, we may notwithstanding be as blesfed, or rather more blessed than they that did, if we do but give credit to what is asserted of him,

and receive and believe what is represented to us in his holy gospels, where by faith we may still fee him working miracles, and hear him declaring his will and pleasure to his disciples, as really as if we had then been by him. And therefore, whatfoever we read in the gospel that he fpake, we are to hearken as diligently to it, as if we heard him speak with our own ears, and be as careful in the performance of it, as if we had receiv'd it from his own mouth; for so we do. tho' not immediately, yet by the infallible pen of them that did so. And seeing he never spake in vain, or to no purpose, nor suffer'd an idle or fuperfluous word to proceed out of his facred and divine mouth, whatfoever he afferted we are to look upon as necessary to be believ'd, because he afferted it; and whatfoever he commanded, we are to look upon as necessary to be observ'd, because he hath commanded it: for we must not think that his affertions are fo frivolous, or his commands fo impertinent, that it is no great matter whether we believe the one and obey the other, or no: no, if we expect to be justified and fav'd by him, he expects to be believ'd and obeyed by us, without which he will not look upon us as his disciples, nor, by consequence, christians, but strangers and aliens to him, whatfoever our professions and pretences are.

It is true, we live in an age wherein christianity, in the general notion of it, is highly courted, all sects and parties amongst us making their pretences to it; whatsoever opinions or circumstances they differ in, be sure they all agree in the external profession of the christian

religion,

religion, and, by consequence, in the acknowledgment that they ought to be christians indeed: but I fear that men are generally mistaken about the notion of true christianity, not thinking it to be so high and divine a thing as really it is; for if they had true and clear conceptions of it, they would never fancy themselves to be christians upon fuch low and pitiful grounds as usually they do, making as if christianity consisted in nothing else, but in the external performance of fome few particular duties, and in adhering to them that profess it; whereas christianity is a thing of a much higher and far more noble nature than fuch would have it, infomuch, that did we but rightly understand it, methinks we could not but be taken with it, fo as to refolve for the future to the utmost of our power to live up to it, to which could I be an instrument of perfuading any, how happy should I think my felf! howsoever, it is my duty to endeavour it, and for that purpose I shall now clear up the true notion of christianity, that we may know, not what it is to be professors and pretenders to chri-Rianity, but what it is to be real christians, and true disciples of Christ Jesus, such as Christ will own for his in another world.

Now to know whom Christ will accept for his disciples, our only way is to consult Christ himfelf, and to consider what it is that he requires of those that follow him, in order to be his disciples; a thing as easily understood, as it is generally disregarded; for nothing can be more plain, than that Christ requires and enjoins all those that would be his disciples, to ob-

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ferve, not only some few, but all the commands that he hath laid upon us. Ye are my friends, faith he, and therefore my disciples, if ye do what foever I command you, John xv. 14. that unless we do whatsoever he commands us, we are so far from being his disciples, that we are indeed his enemies. Nay, they that would be his disciples, must excel and surpass all others in virtue and good works. Herein, faith he, is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples, John xv. 8. yea, and continue in them too, John viii. 31. He tells us also, that they that would be his disciples, must love him above all things, or rather, hate all things in comparison of him, Luke xiv. 26. And that they love one another, as he hath loved them, John xiii. 53. to name no more, read but Matt. xvi. 24. and there you may fee what it is to be a christian indeed, or what it is that Christ requires of those who would be his disciples. any man will come after me, let bim deny bimself, take up his cross and follow me. Did we but understand the true meaning of these words, and order our conversations accordingly, we should both know what it is to be true christians, and really be fo our felves: for I think there is nothing that Christ requires of those who desire to be his disciples, but we should perform it, could we but observe what is here commanded; which, that we may all do, I shall endeavour to give the true meaning of them, and of every particular in them, as they lie in order.

First, saith he, If any man will come after me, that is, if any man will be my disciple; for ma-

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sters ye know use to go before, scholars and disciples to follow after. And our Saviour here speaks of himself under the notion of a master, that hath disciples coming after him, and faith, that if any one would be one of his disciples, so as to go after him, be must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow him. So that here are three things which our bleffed Saviour requires of those that would be his disciples, and, by consequence, of us who profess to be so; for I dare fay, there is none of us but defires to be a christian, or, at least, to be thought so; for we all know and believe Jesus Christ to be the only Saviour of mankind, that none can fave us but he, and that there is none of us but he can fave, and that all those who truly come to him for pardon and Salvation, shall most certainly have it: hence it is that we would all be thought at least fo wife, and to have fo much care of our own fouls, as to go after Christ, and be his disciples. I hope there are but few but who really defire to be fo: but I would not have any think that it is so easy a matter to be a disciple of Christ, or a real and true christian, as the world would make it; no, we may affure our felves, that as it is the highest honour and happiness we can attain unto, so we shall find it the hardest matter in the world to attain unto it; not in its own nature, but by reason of its contrariety to our natural temper and inclinations. For here we fee what it is that our bleffed Saviour requires of those that would go after him, even nothing less than to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him. All which are far greater things than

at the first fight or reading they may seem to be.

For, first, saith he, If any one will come after me, let him deny himself; which being the first thing which Christ requires of those that go after him, it is necessary that we search more narrowly into the nature of it. For if we fail in this, we cannot but fail in all the rest. And therefore, for the opening of this, I shall not trouble the reader with the various expositions and the divers opinions of learned men concerning these words, but only mind him in general, that the felf-denyal here spoken of is properly oppos'd to felf-love, or that corrupt and vicious habit of the foul, whereby we are apt to admire and prefer our own fancies, wills, defires, interests, and the like, before Christ himself, and what he is pleas'd either to promife to us, or require of And therefore when he commands us to deny our felves, his will and pleafure in general is this, that we do not indulge or gratify our felves in any thing that stands in opposition against, and comes into competition with his interest in the world, or ours in him, howsoever near and dear it may be unto us. But to deny our felves whatfoever is pleafing to our felves, if it be not so to God and Christ too, so as not to live to our felves, but only unto him that died for us; to live as those who are none of our own, but are bought with a price, and therefore should glorify God both in our fouls and our bodies, which are his, I Cor. vi. 19, 20. feeing this is not only the first lesson to be learned by Christ's disciples, but that which is neceffarily requir'd in order to whatfoever else he commands commands from us, I shall shew you more particularly what it is in your selves that you are

to deny.

First, You must deny your own reasons in matters of divine revelation, so as to use them no farther than only to search into the grounds and motives that we have to believe them to be reveal'd by God. For this being either prov'd or suppos'd, we are not to suffer our reasons to be too curious in searching into them, but believe them upon the word and testimony of God himself, who is the Supreme Truth, or verity it self.

For we, who by all our art and cunning, cannot understand the reasons of the most common and obvious things in nature, must not think to comprehend the great mysteries of the gospel, which, tho' they be not contrary to our reasons, are infinitely above them. For the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned, 1 Cor. ii. 14. So that to the understanding of the things of the Spirit, or which the Spirit of God hath reveal'd to us, there is a great deal more requir'd than what we have by nature even the supernatural affistance of the Spirit himfelf that reveal'd them. And therefore, If any man among st us seemeth to be wife in this world, let him become a fool that he may be wife, I Cor. iii. 18. that is, He that would be wife unto falvation, must look upon himself as a fool, as one incapable by nature of understanding the things that belong unto his everlasting peace, without K 2 both

both the revelation and affistance of God himself; and therefore must not rely upon his own judgment, but only upon God's testimony in what he doth believe; not believing what his reason, but what God's word tells him; looking upon it as reason enough why he should believe it, because God hath said it.

I know this is an hard doctrine to flesh and blood. For as Job tells us, Vain man would be wise, tho' man be born like a wild ass's colt, Job Tho' by nature we be never so foolish, vain, and ignorant, understanding the great mysteries of the gospel no more than a wild ass's colt doth a mathematical demonstration, yet howfoever we would fain be thought very wife men, yea, fo wife as to be able to comprehend matters of the highest, yea, of an infinite nature, within the narrow compass of our finite and shallow capacities. But this is that which we must deny our selves in, if we desire to be Christ's disciples, so as to acquiesce in his word; and believe what he afferts, only because he afferts it, without suffering our reason to interpose, but looking upon his word as more than all the reafons and arguments in the world befides.

Secondly, You must deny your own wills. Our wills, it is true, at first were made upright and perfect, every way correspondent to the will of God himself; so as to will what he wills, that is, what is really good, and to nill what he nills, that is what is really evil. But being now perverted and corrupt with sin, our wills are naturally inclin'd to the evil which they should be averse from, and averse from the good which

they should be inclin'd to. So that instead of chusing the good, and refusing the evil, we are generally apt to chuse the evil, and refuse the good: Yet, for all that, our wills are thus crooked and perverse, we cannot endure to have them cross'd or thwarted in any thing, but would needs have our own wills in every thing, fo as neither to do any thing our felves, nor yet have any thing done to us, but just as our selves will, who will usually just contrary to what we should. But now they that would be Christ's disciples, must not be thus self-will'd, but deny themselves the fulfilling of their own wills, when it doth not confift with the will of God to have them fulfill'd. This our Lord and Master hath taught us by his example as well as precept, faying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will but thine be done, Luke xxii. 42. Where we may observe, that our bleffed Saviour, as man, could not but have a natural averseness from death, as all men by nature have, and that without fin. Yet, tho' Christ's will as man, was never so pure and perfect, yet he wholly submits it to the will of God. He manifested, indeed, that it was the will of that nature which he had affum'd, not to fuffer death, saying; if it be possible let this cup pass from me; but he shews withal, that the will of man must still be subject to the will of God; and that man, even as man, must deny his own will, whensoever it runneth not exactly parallel with God's, faying, nevertheless not my will but thine be done.

And if Christ himself denied his own most pure and perfect will, that his Father's might be accomplish'd, how much more cause have we to deny our wills, which by nature are always contrary to his will, yea, and to our own good too, perferring generally that which is evil and destructive to us, before that which is truly good and advantageous for us? And, verily, a great part of true christianity confisteth in thus refigning our wills to God's, not minding so much which way our own inclinations bend, as what his pleasure and command is. A notable instance whereof we have in old Eli, who questionless could not but be very willing that the iniquity of his fons might be forgiven, and his family prosper in the world; yet, howsoever, when God had manifested his pleasure to him, that his house should be destroy'd, he submitted his own will wholly unto God's, faying, It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good, 1 Sam. iii. 18. And whosoever of us would be Christ's disciple indeed, must be sure thus to deny and renounce his own will, whenfoever it appears to be contrary unto God's, fo as even to will, that not his own will but God's be fulfilled, as our Lord and Master himself hath taught us each Day to pray, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in beaven. And whofoever hath learn'd this art of making his own will bow and stoop to God's, hath made a very good progress in the christian religion, especially in that part of it which requires us to deny our felves.

And feeing we must deny our wills, we must needs deny our affections too, which are indeed nothing else but the several motions of the will towards good and evil, but usually they are so disorderly disorderly and irregular, as to place themselves upon objects directly opposite to what they were defign'd for, for that we ordinarily love what we ought to hate, and hate what we ought to love; defire what we ought to abhor, and abhor what we ought to defire; rejoyce in those things which we ought to grieve for, and are griev'd at fuch things as we ought to rejoyce in. So that if we fuffer our affections to move according to their natural tendency and corrupt inclinations, we shall be so far from going after Christ, that we shall be continually running from him. And therefore it must be our great care and study to bridle our affections, deny them their unlawful, and fix them upon their proper objects; yea, and to deny our felves too the lawful use of such things, as our affections are apt to be unlawfully placed upon. As for example: It is lawful, yea, our duty, to love our relations; but if our love to them becomes exorbitant, fo as to love them more than God, our love to them must be turn'd into hatred, in comparison of our love to him, Luke xiv. 26. And whatfoever lawful thing it is that we take pleasure in, if once we find that our pleasure in that extinguisheth, or but damps that pleasure which we used or ought to have in God, we are to deny our felves fuch pleasures as these are, and rather despise our selves than God.

Yea, we must deny our selves, moreover, the use and enjoyment of our estates and earthly possessions, when soever they come in competitions with his glory. So that if it comes to that point, that we must either leave our estates to enjoy Christ, or leave Christ to enjoy our estates, we must be

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willing and ready, without any more ado, to abandon and renounce whatfoever elfe we have. rather than our interest in Christ. For indeed, he is not worthy to be Christ's disciple that doth not prefer him before all things else; neither he that loves the world at all in comparison of Christ: For if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him, I John ii. 15. And therefore he that would be Christ's disciple indeed, must fix his heart so fast on Christ, that it hang loofe and indifferent as to all things here below, being no more proud of them, no more delighted in them, no more concern'd about them, than as if he had them not. So that tho' he have " all things besides Christ, he must have nothing but him, or at least, in comparison of him; yea, be ready to part with all that he may gain Christ. And tho' many of us may think this an hard faying, we may affure our felves, it is no more than what we must do, if we desire to be Christ's disciples, Luke xiv. 33.

Furthermore, we must deny our selves especially those sins and lusts which we have or dostill indulge our selves in; for thus the gospel teacheth you, in a particular manner, to deny ungodlines and worldly lusts, Tit. ii. 12. And therefore we in vain pretend to be true christians, so long as we live in any one known sin with any love unto it, or delight in it. I suppose none of my readers guilty of all sins, and I fear there are sew but live in some. No man but may be naturally averse from some sins, but it is very rare to find one that is inclin'd to none; for ordinarily every man hath his darling, his beloved

ved fin, his own fin, as David himself once had. tho' he afterwards kept himself from it, Psal. xviii. 23. So I fear none of my readers but have fome fin, which he may, in a peculiar manner, call his own, as being that which his thoughts run most upon, and his desires are carried most unto, which he labours most after, and takes most pleasure in which he is most loth to be reprov'd for, and most easily overcome by. Now this and whatfoever other fins any of us are addicted to, we must wholly leave, and utterly renounce, if ever we desire to be Christ's disciples. therefore so long as any of us live in any known fin, as in pride or prodigality, in oppression or covetousness, in malice or uncleanness, in drunkenness, uncharitableness, or any other sin whatfoever, we must not think our selves to be christians indeed, Christ will never own us for his disciples; for so long as we live in any known fin, it is that fin, not Christ, that is our master; and therefore if we would lift our felves into his fervice, we must be fure to deny our selves whatsoever we know to be offensive to him.

There is still another thing behind, wherein we must deny our selves, if we desire to go after Christ, and that is, we must deny and renounce all our self righteousness, and all hopes and considences from our selves, and from what we have done, which I look upon as a very great piece of self-denyal; for naturally we are all prone to sacrifice to our own nets, to burn incense to our own draggs, to boast of our own good works, and to pride our selves with the conceit of our own righteousness. Tho' we be never so sinful, we would not be thought

thought to be so, but would very fain be accounted righteous, not only by men, but by God himfelf, for fomething or other which our felves do, tho' when all comes to all, we know not what that should be; but howsoever the pride of our heart is fuch, that we are loth to go out of our felves to look for righteousness, or to be beholden to another for it. And this is the reason that justification by faith in Christ, hath had so many adversaries in the world; mankind in general being so much in love with themselves, and doting upon what themselves do, that they cannot endure to renounce and vilify their own obedience and good works, fo much as to think that they stand in need of any other righteousness besides their own; as if their own righteousness was so perfect, that God himself could find no fault with it, nor make any exceptions against it, but must needs acknowledge them to be just and righteous persons for it.

Whereas, alas! there is not the best action that ever a meer mortal did, but if examin'd by the strict rules of justice, it is far from being good, yea, so far, that God himself may justly pronounce it evil, and, by consequence, condemn the person that did it for doing of it. And therefore I cannot but wonder what it is that any man doth or can do, for which he can in reason expect to be justified before God, our very righteousness being, as the prophet tells, but as filthy rags, and our most holy performances fraught with sin and imperfection, and therefore so far from justifying us, that we may justly be condemn'd for them; but this mankind doth not

love to hear of, the pride of our hearts being such, that by all means we must have something our selves whereof to glory before God himself. But woe be to that person who hath no other righteousness but his own, wherein to appear before the judge of the whole world: for howsoever specious his actions may seem to men, they will

be adjudg'd fins before the eternal God.

He therefore that would come to Christ, altho' he must labour after righteousness to the utmost of his power, yet when he hath done all, he must renounce it and look upon himself as an unprofitable fervant. For Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance, Mat. xix. 13. that is, he came not to call fuch persons as think they have righteousness enough of their own to serve their turns, for fuch persons think they have no need of him, and therefore it would be in vain to call them; but he calls finners, that is, fuch as may perhaps be as righteous as the other, but they do not think themselves to be so, but look upon themselves as undone for ever, unless they have something else to trust to, than their own good works and obedience to the moral law. Such persons therefore Christ came to call, and if they come to him, they cannot but find rest and righteousness in him; and if any of us desire to go after Christ, so as to be his disciples, we must be sure to look upon our selves as sinners, as deferving nothing but wrath and vengeance for whatfoever we have done; we must renounce all our own righteousness, and be so far from depending upon it, as to think that we have none to depend upon, for so really we have not. And when

when we have laid afide all thoughts of our own righteousness, as to the matter of our justification before God, then, and not till then, shall we be rightly qualified to embrace anothers, even that righteousness which is by faith in Christ. Thus St. Paul, though he had as much, yea, more reafon to trust in the flesh or in himself than others; for himself faith, that as touching the righteousness which is of the law, he was blameless, Phil. iii. 6. Yet faith he, what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. For whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung that I may win Christ, and be found in bim, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, ver. 7, 8, 9. Thus therefore it is that all those must do, who desire to be as St. Paul was, real disciples of Jesus Christ, as we must forfake our fins, so we must renounce our righteousness too. It is true, this is a great and difficult part of felf-denial, thus to deny our felves all that pride, pleasure and confidence, which we used to take in the thoughts of our own righteousness and obedience to the law of God. But we must remember that the first thing which our Saviour enjoins those that come after him, is to deny themselves.

Thus I have shewn what it is in our selves that we must deny, and how it is that we must deny our selves, if we defire to go after Christ; we must deny our selves the curiosity of search-

ing too much into the mysteries of the gospel, by the light of our own clouded reasons; we must deny our self-conceit, our self-will, our selflove, self-interests, self-confidence, and whatsoever proceeds from and terminates in our fenfual and finful felves, fo as to have no delight in nor dependance upon our felves; yea, we must so deny our selves, as to be quite taken off of our former felves, and become other creatures than what be-Thus St. Ambrose explains these fore we were. words, faying, Seipsum sibi homo abneget & totus mutetur, Let a man deny himself to himself so as to be wholly changed from what he was. But then you will fay, what need is there of all this trouble, what reason can be given that a man must deny himself before he can be a true Christian?

To that I answer, It is reason enough that Christ hath commanded us to do it, and surely he best knows whom he will accept of as his disciples, and what is necessary to be done in order to our being so. And he hath said in plain terms, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, implying, that he that doth not deny himself.

self cannot go after him.

But besides that, there is an impossibility in the thing it self, that any one should be a true Christian, or go after Christ, and not deny himself, as may be easily perceiv'd, if they will but consider what true Christianity requires of us, and what it is to be a real christian. A true christian we know is one that lives by faith, and not by sight, that looks not at the things which are seen, but at those things which are not seen, that believes whatsoever Christ hath said, trusteth

on whatsoever he hath promised, and obeyeth whatsoever he hath commanded; that receiveth Christ as his only priest to make atonement for him, as his only prophet to instruct, and as his only lord and mafter to rule and govern him. In a word, a christian is one that gives up himself and all he hath to Christ, who gave himself and all he hath to him; and therefore the very notion of true christianity implies and supposes the denyal of our felves, without which it is as impossible for a man to be a christian as it is for a subject to be rebellious and loyal to his prince at the fame time; and therefore it is absolutely necessary that we go out of our selves before we can go to him, we must strip our selves of our very felves before we can put on Christ; for Christ himfelf hath told us, that no man can ferve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other, Mat. vi. 24. We cannot ferve God and mammon, Christ and our felves too; so that we must either deny our selves to go after Christ, or else deny Christ to goafter our selves, so as to mind our own felfish ends and defigns in the world.

Wherefore I hope I need not use any other arguments to persuade any to deny themselves in the sense already explained; I dare say there is none amongst us but would willingly be what we profess, even a real christian, and so go after Christ here, as to come to him hereafter. But we have now seen how Christ himself hath told us, that we must deny our selves, if we desire to serve and enjoy him. And verily it is an hard case if we cannot deny our selves for him, who

fo far denied himself for us, as to lay down his own life to redeem ours. He who was equal to God himself, yea, who himself was the true God, so far denied himself as to become man. yea, a man of forrows, and acquainted with griefs for us, and cannot we deny our felves fo much as a fancy, a conceit, a fin or lust for him? How then can we expect that he should own us for his friends, his fervants or disciples; no, he'll never do it, neither can we in reason expect that he should give himself and all the merits of his death and paffion unto us, fo long as we think much to give our felves to him, or to deny our And therefore if we defire to felves for him. be made partakers of all those glorious things thathe hath purchas'd with his own most precious blood for the fons of men; let us begin here, indulge our flesh no longer, but deny our selves whatfoever God hath been pleased to forbid. And for that end, let us endeavour each day more and more to live above our felves, above the temper of our bodies, and above the allurements of the world, live as those who believe and profess that they are none of their own but Christ's; his by creation, it was he that made us; his by preservation, it is he that maintains us; and his by redemption, it is he that hath purchafed and redeemed us with his own blood. And therefore let us deny our felves for the future to our very felves, whose we are not, and devote our felves to him whose alone we are; by this we shall manifest our selves to be Christ's disciples indeed, especially if we do not only deny our felves, but also take up our cross and follow him; which which brings me to the fecond thing which our bleffed Saviour here requires of those who would

go after him, even to take up their cross.

Where, by the cross, we are to understand whatfoever troubles or calamities, inward or outward, we meet with in the performance of our duty to God or man, which they that would go after Christ must take up as they go along, without any more ado, neither repining at them, nor finking under them; for we must not think that Christ invites us to an earthly paradife of idleness and outward pleasures, as if we had nothing to do or to fuffer for him. For even as men we cannot but find many croffes in the world, but as christians we must expect more, for Christ himself hath told us, that in the world we shall have tribulation, John xvi. 33. therefore whatfoever we meet with, is no more than what we are to look for; especially if we walk uprightly in the way that leads to heaven, we cannot but expect to meet with many a rub, for God himself hath told us, that it is through many tribulations that we must enter into the kingdom of heaven, Actsxiv. 22. And therefore we must not think to be carried up to heaven with the breath of popular applause, nor to swim through a deluge of carnal pleasures into the haven of everlasting happiness. No, we must look to be toffed to and fro in this world, as in a raging and tempestuous ocean, and never look for perpetual calmness and tranquility, until we are got above the clouds, yea even above the fun and stars themselves. This world was always a world of trouble, and ever will be, its very friends,

friends, and they that have their portion here, can find no quiet nor fatisfaction in it; but the disciples of Christ they are not of this world, as Christ himself tells us, John xvii. 14. and therefore no wonder if the world frowns more upon them than others. The way they walk in is opposite to the world, it is enmity it self to the flesh, and therefore no wonder if they meet with fo much enmity and opposition here; the way wherein they go after Christ is a cross way, it is cross to fin, cross to fatan, cross to the world. cross to our very selves as we are by nature, and by consequence cross to all men in the world but Christ's disciples, and therefore it is no wonder they meet with fo many croffes in it. But howfoever, if we defire to go after Christ, he hath told us before hand what we must expect; as he hath born the cross before us, he expects that we now bear it after him; yea, we must not only bear it, but take it up too: not that we should run our selves into danger, but that we should baulk no duty to avoid it, fo as to be willing and ready to undergo the greatest suffering, rather than to commit the least fin, and to run the greatest danger rather than neglect the smallest duty. If whilst we are walking in the narrow path of holiness, there happens to lie a cross in the way, we must not go on one side nor on the other fide of it out of the path we walk in, neither must we kick and spurn at it, but we must patiently take it up and carry it along with us; if it be a little heavy at first, it will soon grow lighter, and not at all hinder, but rather further our progress towards heaven.

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But here we must have a great care to understand our Saviour's meaning, and so our own duty aright; for we must not think that every trouble we meet with in the world is the cross of Christ; for we may suffer for our fancy or humour, or perhaps for our fin and transgression of the laws of God or men, and if fo, it is our own cross, not Christ's which we take upon us; we may thank our selves for it, I am sure Christ hath no cause to thank us: for this is thank worthy, faith the apostle, if a man for conscience towards God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully, I Pet. ii. 19, 20. And therefore the duty which our Saviour here imposeth on us, in few terms is this, that we be ready not only to do, but to fuffer what we can for the glory of God and the furtherance of the gospel, and that we omit no duty, nor commit any fin for fear of fuffering; not to think much of any trouble that befals us for Christ's fake, but rather to rejoice at it, even as the apostles rejoic'd, that they were accounted worthy to suffer shame for his name, Acts v. 41. Which was a clear instance of their performing the duty here enjoyn'd both them and us, under the name of taking up our cross.

And I hope there is none of us can take it ill that Christ hath imposed so severe a duty upon us; for we may assure our selves he requires no more of us than what himself hath undergone before, so that we can suffer nothing for him, but what he hath suffer'd before for us. Have we grief and trouble in our hearts? so had he, Matt. xxvi. 38. Have we pains and tortures in our bodies? so had he, Mat. xxvii. 29, 30. Are

we derided and scoffed at? so was he, Mat. xxvii. 31. Are we arraigned or condemned, yea do we fuffer death it felf? it is no more than what our Lord and Master hath done before. And let us remember what he told us when he was upon the earth, The disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord, Matt. x. 24. If we be Christ's disciples, we cannot expect to fare better in the world than Christ himself did, neither indeed can we fare so bad; for it is impossible that we should undergo so much for him as he hath undergone for us, ours being only the sufferings of men, his the sufferings of one who was God as well as man; whereby fufferings in general are fanctified to our humane nature; it having already undergone them in the person of the Son of God, so that it can be now no disparagement at all to undergo any trouble, as hatred, reproach, poverty, pain, yea, death it felf, or any other calamity whatfoever in this world, feeing the Son of God himself, he that made the world, underwent the fame while himfelf was in it. And therefore we need not think it below us to stoop down and take up the cross of Christ, as considering that Christ having born it before us, hath so bleffed and fanctified it unto us, that it is now become an honourable, an advantageous, yea and a pleasant cross, to them that bear it patiently, thankfully and constantly, as they ought to do, especially seeing it is such a cross, as leads unto a crown; and what soever we can do or fuffer for Christ here, will be fully recompenced with glory hereafter, and therefore instead of being troubled to take up our cross,  $L_2$ we

we are rather to rejoice that we have any to take

up.

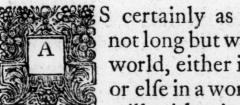
Thus we see in few words what it is which our Saviour commands from us, when he enjoins us to deny our felves, and take up our cross, even that we do not gratify our selves in any thing that is ungrateful unto him, grudge to take up any cross, or suffer any trouble we meet with in the world for his fake, thinking nothing too dear to forfake, nor any thing too heavy to bear for him, who thought not his own life too dear, nor the cross itself too heavy to bear for us; what now remains, but that knowing our Saviour's pleasure, we should all resolve to do it? There is none of us but hope and defire to be faved by him, but that we can never be, unless we observe what he hath prescribed in order to our falvation; and amongst other things, we fee how he hath commanded us, to deny our felves, and take up our cross; as any of us therefore defires to be Christians indeed, fo as to fee Christ's face with comfort in another world, let us bethink our felves feriously what fins we have hitherto indulged our felves in; I fear there are but few, if any amongst us, but are conscious to themselves, that they have and do still live, either in the constant neglect of fome known duty, or else in the frequent commission of some beloved sin; what that is, I dare not undertake to tell, but leave that to God and to mens own consciences; only I desire them to deal faithfully with their own fouls, and not fuffer themselves to be fooled into a fond and vain persuasion that they have an interest in Christ,

Christ, or are truly his disciples, until they deny themselves that sin, what soever it is, which they have hitherto indulg'd themselves in. And let us not think that we shall deny our selves any real pleasure or profit, by renouncing our fins; for what pleasure can we have in displeasing God, or profit in losing our own souls? No, we shall gratify our selves more than we can imagine by denying our felves, as much as we are able, whatfoever is offensive or displeasing unto God; for we may be fure, he that came into the world, on purpose to save us from evil, commands us nothing but for our own good, neither would he ever have obliged us to deny our felves, if we could be faved without it; and as for the cross, that he was so well acquainted with, that he would never have imposed it upon us to take it up, but that it is indispensably necessary for us. And therefore if we be what we pretend, real and true christians, let us manifest it to the world and to our own consciences, by denying our felves whatfoever Chrift hath denied us, and by observing whatsoever he hath commanded us, even to the taking up of any cross, that he for his own sake shall suffer to be laid upon us, still remembring, that felf-denyal, tho' it be unpleasant, is a most necessary duty; and the cross, tho' it be never so heavy, it is but short, and have nothing less than a crown annexed unto it, a glorious and eternal crown, which all those shall most certainly obtain, who deny themselves.

## THOUGHTS

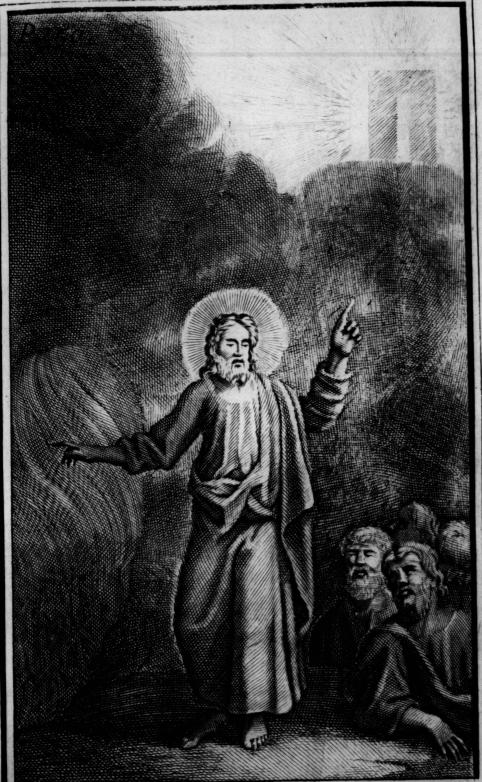
UPON

Striving to enter in at the Strait Gate.



S certainly as we are here now, it is not long but we shall all be in another world, either in a world of happiness or else in a world of misery, or if you will, either in heaven or in hell. For

these are the two only places which all mankind from the beginning of the world to the end of it, must live in for evermore, some in the one, fome in the other, according to their carriage and behaviour here; and therefore it is worth the while to take a view and prospect now and then of both these places, and it will not be amiss if we do it now; for which end, I defire the reader in his ferious and composed thoughts to attend me first into the celestial mansions, above yonder glorious fun and the stars themselves, where not only the cherubins and feraphins, angels and archangels, but many also of our brethren, the fons of men, at this very moment are enjoying the presence, and singing forth the praises of the most high God. There are the spirits of just men made perfect, perfect in themfelves, and perfect in all their actions, perfectly free from all both fin and mifery, perfectly full of all true graces and glory, all their faculties being reduced to that most perfect and excellent frame and constitution, that their understandings are conti-



Straight is the Gate and narrow is the Way which - leadeth unto Life. P.Lavergne Inv. HHw/bergh Sculp:



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continually taken up with the contemplations of the supreme truth, and their wills in the embracement of the chiefest Good; so that all the inclinations of their fouls rest in God as in their proper centre, in whom by consequence they enjoy as much as they can defire, yea as much as they can be made capable of defiring. For all those infinite perfections that are concentred in God himself, are now in their possesfion to folace and delight themselves in the full and perfect enjoyment of them; by which means they are as happy as God himself can make them, infomuch that at this very moment methinks we may all behold them fo ravished, so transported with their celestial joys, that it may justly strike us into admiration, how creatures which once were finful, could ever be made fo pure, so perfect, and altogether so happy as they are. And could we but leave our bodies for a while below, and go up to take a turn in the new Jerusalem that is above, we could not but be ravished and transported at the very fight both of the place and inhabitants, every one being far more glorious than the greatest emperors of this world, with nothing less than crowns of glory on their heads, and scepters of righteousness in their hands, where they think of nothing but praising him, do nothing but adore and worship him; in a word, whatsoever is agreeable to our natures, whatfoever is defirable to our fouls, whatfoever can any way conduce to make men happy, is fully, perfectly, eternally enjoy'd, by all and every person that is in heaven. Whereas on the other fide, if we L 4 bring

bring down our thoughts from heaven, and fend them as low as hell, to confider the most deplorable estate and condition of those who inhabit the regions of darkness, them we shall find as miserable as the other are happy; not only in that they are deprived of the vision and fruition of the chiefest Good, but likewise in that they are in continual pain and torment, as great as infinite justice can adjudge them to, and infinite power inflict upon them; infomuch, that could we lay our ear to the entrance of that bottomless pit, what howlings and shriekings should we hear? what weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth in the midst of those infernal flames, where, as our Saviour himself tells us. The worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mark ix. 44. That is, where their consciences are always gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former fins, and the fire of God's wrath is continually burning in them, never to be quenched or abated. For certainly as the smiles and favour of the eternal God constitute the joys of heaven, so do his frowns and anger make up the flames of hell. To see him that made us displeased with us, to fee mercy it felf to frown upon us, to fee the great and all-glorious Creator of the world, the chiefest Good, to look angrily upon us, and to mean himself offended at us, and incenfed against us? Methinks the very thoughts of it are sufficient to make the stoutest heart amongst us tremble: But then what shall we think of those poor fouls that fee and feel it? What shall we think of them? questionquestionless they are more miserable than we are able to think them to be. For we cannot possibly conceive either the greatness of heaven's glory, or the sharpness of hell torments, only this we know and may be certain of, that what-soever is ungrateful to their minds, whatsoever is troublesome to their thoughts, whatsoever is contrary to their desires, whatsoever is painful to their bodies, or whatsoever is or can be destructive and tormenting to their souls, that all they who are once in hell, shall fear and feel, and that for ever.

But this is too fad and doleful a fubject to infift on long, neither should I have mentioned it, but for our own good, and to prepare us the better, both for the understanding and improving the advice of our Saviour, *Matt.* vii. 13, 14. Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c. The meaning of which words, in brief, may be reduced to these three heads.

First, That it is an easy matter to go to hell, that place of torments we have now been describing, and by consequence, that many go thither; for the gate is wide, and the way is broad that leadeth thereto.

Secondly, That it is a hard and difficult thing to get to heaven, that place of joys we before spake of, and by consequence, that but few get thither, For strait is the gate, and narrow is the way that leadeth to it.

Lastly, Howsoever difficult it is, our Saviour would have us strive to get to heaven, so as to press through that strait gate, and walk in that narrow way that leadeth into life.

As for the first, that the gate is wide and the way broad, that leads to hell, or that it is an eafy matter to go thither, I need not use many words to prove it. For though there be but few that mind it, I dare fay there is scarce any one but believes it, yea, and hath oftentimes found it to be true by experience, even that it is an easy matter to fin, and that, we know, is the broad way that leads to hell; fo broad, that they that walk in it can find no bounds or limits in it, where within to contain themselves; neither are they ever out of their way, but go which way they will, they are still in the ready way to ruin and destruction. And usually it is as plain as broad, fo that men rarely meet with roughness or trouble in it, but rather with all the pleasures and delights which they defire, who look no higher than to please the flesh; yea, whatsoever it is that they naturally defire, they still meet with it in the road to hell; and whatfoever is ungrateful and irksome to them, they are never troubled with it in the ways of fin. There are no crosses to be taken up, no self to be denied, but rather indulged and gratified; there are no fuch tedious and troublesome things as examining our hearts, and mortifying our lufts, as praying or hearing, as fasting or watching: these are only to be found in the narrow path that leads to heaven, the broad way to hell is altogether unacquainted with them, being strewed all along with carnal pleasures and sensual delights, with popular applause, and earthly riches, and such fine things as filly mortals use to be taken with.

And hence it is, that, as our Saviour tells us, many there be which find this way, and go in at this wide gate that leads to ruin, because they fee not whither it leads, but they fee the baits and allurements which are in it, which they cannot but crowd about as fishes about a hook, or as flies about a candle, till they be destroyed. Yea, this way to destruction is so broad, that almost all the world is continually walking in it; the gate so wide that thousands at a time pass through it. And therefore we may well conclude it is an easy thing to go to that place of torments which even now we spake of, or rather that it is an hard, a difficult matter to keep out of it; the way being so narrow that carries from it that it is a difficult thing to find it, and the way fo broad that leads unto it, that none can miss of it that hath but a mind to walk in it.

But I hope none of my readers have so, God forbid they should have a mind to go to hell; their taking religious books into their hands is rather an argument that they have a mind to go to heaven, and read on purpose to learn the way thither. And we do well to take all opportunities of finding out the way to blifs, for we may assure our selves it is a very narrow one, it is hard to find it out, but much more hard to walk in it; for it is a way very rarely trodden, so that there is scarce any path to be seen, most people going either on one fide, or elfe on the other fide of it; some running into the by-paths of error, herefy, or schism, others into the broad way of prophaneness or security: insomuch that there are but very few that hit upon the right path

path that leads directly to the new ferusalem, the place of rest. I speak not this of my self; no, Christ himself, that came from heaven to earth, on purpose to shew us the way from earth to heaven, saith, that strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leadeth unto life, and

few there be that find it.

And let not any think that Christ spoke these words in vain, or that it is no great matter whether we believe what he faid or no. For questionless, one great reason why so few come to heaven, is because most think it so easy to get thither that they need not take any care or pains about it. For even amongst our selves, to whom the gospel is so clearly reveal'd, men generally think if they do but read the scriptures, and hear fermons, and live honestly with their neighbours, fo as to harm no body, but pay every one their own, then they shall as surely come to heaven as if they were there already; nay, many are for fimple as to think that their separation from the church militant on earth is the way to bring them to the church triumphant in heaven; and others fo ridiculous as to believe that a death-bed repentance is fufficient to entitle them to eternal But stay a while: it is not so easy a matter. to get to heaven. Indeed to me it feems one of the greatest mysteries in the world, that ever any man or woman should come thither, that fuch finful worms as we are, who are born in fin, and live fo long in fin and rebellion against the great Creator of the world, should ever be receiv'd fo far into his grace and favour as to enjoy life and eternal happiness in him. And did

we look no farther than our selves, we might justly despair of ever obtaining so transcendent glory which we are altogether so unworthy of. But the goodness of God both is and hath been so great to mankind, that there is none of us but in and through the merits of Christ Jesus, is in a capacity of it. But we must not think that it is so easy a thing to come to heaven, as the devil, the world, and our own base hearts would persuade us it is: if we do, we are never likely to come thither! no, we may assure our selves, as heaven is the greatest good that we can attain, so doth it require our greatest care and study

imaginable to attain it.

This therefore is that which I shall endeavour to convince men of, and account my felf happy if I can do it. For, I dare say, there is none of us but defire to fee Christ in glory, and to be happy with him and in him for ever; but that we can never be, unless we do whatsoever is required of us in order to it; and if we think it is so easy a matter to do whatsoever is required of us, I have just cause to suspect that we never yet made tryal of it, nor fet our felves seriously upon the performance of those duties which are enjoined us here in reference to our being happy for ever. For if we have fet upon it in good earnest, we cannot but have found it very hard and difficult, by reason of our natural averseness from what is good, and inclinations unto evil. For we all know, that without boliness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xiii. 14. So that holiness is the way, the direct and only way that leads to heaven; neither is there any way imaginable of being

being happy hereafter but by being holy here. And tho' it be an easy thing to profess holiness, and to perform some external acts of it; yet to be truly pious and holy indeed, so as we must be, if ever we would go to heaven, this is every whit

as difficult as the other is eafy.

For first, I suppose, all will grant, that he is not truly holy that lives in any known fin, as the apostle also intimates, saying, he that is born of God doth not commit fin, I John iii. 9. And therefore he that still indulgeth himself in the commission of any known fin, he is not yet regenerate or born of God, he is not truly holy. that to our being fo holy here, as that we may be happy hereafter, it is absolutely and indifpenfably necessary that we forfake and avoid to the utmost of our power whatsoever is offensive unto God, and contrary to his laws. But it is as difficult as it is necessary to forfake fin as we ought to do. It is an easy matter, I confess, to rail at fin, to backbite others, or blame our felves for it. But that is not the business; but to loath our fins as much as ever we loved them, to abhor as much as ever we defired them, and to be as much averse from them as ever we were inclined to them, to forfake fin as fin, and by consequence all fin whatsoever, one as well as another; fo as to deny our felves all that pleafure we were wont to take in any fin, and all that feeming profit which we used to receive by it, and that too, out of love to God and fear of his This is to forfake fin indeed, but displeasure. it is fooner spoken of than done; and it requires a great deal of time, and skill, and pains to get fo

fo great a conquest over our felves as this is, to cut off our right hand, pluck out our right eye, and cast it from us; even renounce and forsake those very beloved and darling fins, which the temper and constitution of our bodies, the corruption of our hearts, and constant custom and practice hath made in a manner natural to us. So that our very natures must be changed, before we can ever leave them. And therefore it must needs be a matter of as great difficulty as it is of moment, to mafter and fubdue those fins and lusts that have been long predominant in us, which I dare fay many of us have found by their own fad and woful experience, having struggled perhaps many years against some corruption, and yet to this day have not got it under, nor totally subdued it. And it is such, and fuch alone, who are competent judges in this case; for they who never strove against their sins, cannot know how strong they are, nor how hard it is to conquer them. And therefore it is to those who have made it their business to destroy and mortify their lufts, that I appeal, whether it be not hard to do it. I am confident they cannot but have found it, and therefore must needs acknowledge it to be fo; and by consequence that it is no easy matter to get to heaven, feeing it is fo hard to keep out of hell, and to avoid those fins which otherwise will certainly bring us thither; every fin unrepented of having eternal punishment entailed upon it.

And if it be so hard to forsake sin, how difficult must it needs be to perform all those duties, and to exert all those graces which are necessarily requir'd, required, in order to our attaining everlasting happiness. It is true, praying and hearing which are the ordinary means for the obtaining true grace and holiness, are duties very common and customary amongst us, but they are never the casier because they are common, but rather far more difficult. For we being accustomed to a careless and perfunctory performing these duties, cannot but find it an hard and difficult matter to keep our hearts so close unto them, as to perform them as we ought to do, and fo as that we may be really faid to do them. For we must not think that fitting at church while the word of God is preached, is hearing the word of God, or that being present there whilst prayers are read, is real praying. No, no, there is a great deal more required than this to our praying to the great God aright; infomuch that for mine own part, I really think that prayer, as it is the highest, so is it the hardest duty that we can be engaged in. All the faculties of our fouls, as well as members of our bodies, being obliged to put forth themselves in their several capacities, to the due performance of it.

And as for the several graces and vertues which our souls must be adorned withal, before ever they can come to heaven, though it be easy to talk of them, it is not so to act them. I shall instance only in some few; as to love God above all things, and other things only for God's sake; to hope on nothing but God's promises, and to fear nothing but his displeasure; to love other mens persons, so as to hate their vices, and so hate their vices as still to love their persons; not

to covet riches when we have them not, not trust on them when we have them; to deny our felves that we may please God, and to take up our cross that we may follow Christ; to live above the world whilst we are in it, and to despise it while we use it; to be always upon our watch and guard, strictly observing not only the outward actions of our life, but the inward motions of our hearts; to hate those very fins which we used to love, and to love those very duties which we used to hate; to chuse the greatest affliction before the least fin, and to neglect the getting of the greatest gain, rather than the performing of the smallest duty; to believe truths which we cannot comprehend, merely upon the testimony of one whom we never faw; to fubmit our wills to God's, and delight our felves in obeying him; to be patient under fufferings, and thankful for all the troubles we meet with here below; to be ready and willing to do and fuffer any thing we can for him, who hath done and fuffered so much for us; to cloath the naked, feed the hungry, relieve the indigent, and rescue the oppressed to the utmost of our power: in a word, to be every way as pious towards God, as obedient to Christ, as loyal to our prince, as faithful to our friends, as loving to our enemies, as charitable to the poor, as just in our dealings, as eminent in all true grace and virtue, as if we were to be faved by it, and yet by no confidence in it, but still look upon our selves as unprofitable fervants, and depend upon Christ, and Christ alone, for pardon and falvation.

I suppose I need not tell any one that it is hard and difficult to perform such duties, and to act fuch graces as these are; but this let me tell the reader, that how hard, how difficult foever it is, it must be done if ever we design to come to heaven, and by confequence it is no easy matter to come thither. Seeing therefore the way that leads to heaven is thus narrow and hard, it is no wonder that there are but few that walk in it, or indeed that find it out, as our Saviour himfelf assures us; for people generally love to swim with the stream, to run with the multitude, though it be into the gulph of fin and mifery. It is very rare to find one walking in the narrow way, and keeping himself within those bounds and limits wherewith it is inclosed; and this feems to have been the occasion of these words in the gospel of St. Luke, where one said unto Christ, Lord, are there few that be faved? and our Saviour answered in these words, Strive to enter in at the strait gate. For many I say unto you will feek to enter in, and shall not be able. Luke xiii. 23, 24. Intimating not only that there are but few that shall be faved, but likewise that many of those that seek to be saved shall not attain it; not as if any of those who really and cordially made it their business to look after heaven, can never miss of it; but that many of those who prefuming upon their feeming obedience and good works, shall think and seek that way to enter into the kingdom of God, shall not be able. For many will say unto me at that day, faith he, Lord, Lord, have we not prophefied in thy name, and in thy name cast out devils, and in thy name done many

many wonderful works? And then I will profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity, Mat. vii. 22, 23. And if many of those who are great professors of religion, and make a plaufible shew of piety in the world, shall not with standing come short of eternal happiness, and if of those many which are called, there are but few chosen, Matt. xx. 16. we may well conclude there are but few, but very few indeed that walk in the narrow path that leads to life, in comparison of those innumerable multitudes that continually flock together in the broad way that leads to ruin and destruction. One great reason whereof is, because men generally, though they defire to go to heaven, yet will not believe it to be so hard a thing as really it is, to get thither; and therefore fetting afide the superficial performance of some few external duties, they give themselves no trouble, nor take any pains about it; as if heaven was fo contemptible a thing, that it is not worth their while to look after it; or howfoever, as if it was fo eafy a thing to attain it, that they cannot miss of it whether they look after it or no. Whereas questionless, as heaven is the greatest happiness that we are capable of, so is it the hardest matter in the world for any of us to attain it.

I fay not this to discourage any one, but rather to excite and encourage all to a greater care and diligence in the prosecution of eternal happiness, than ordinarily men seem to have. It is my hearty desire and prayer that every soul among us may live and be happy for ever; but that we can never be unless we be serious, earnest and

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constant

constant in looking after it, more than after all things in the world besides. And therefore it is that I have endeavour'd to convince men that it is not so easy a thing as they feem to make it to go to heaven; the path being fo exceeding narrow that leads unto it: which I hope by this time we are all perfuaded of, so as to be resolved within our felves to play no longer with religion, but to fet upon it in good earnest, so as to make it not only our great but our only business and defign in this world, to prepare for another, and to work out our falvation with fear and trembling, and by confequence to walk in that narrow way of true piety and virtue that leads to heaven, without going afide into the vices on either hand, or howfoever to use the utmost of our endeavour to observe the rules which Christ hath prescribed us, in order to our living with him for ever, and, oh! that I knew what words to take unto my felf, and what arguments to use, whereby to prevail with every foul of us, to make it our business to get to heaven; and by confequence to walk directly in the narrow way, and through the strait gate that leads unto it. What influence or effect they may have upon the readers, I know not, howfoever I shall endeavour to prefent them with some such considerations, I hope by the bleffing of God, and the affiftance of his grace, may be fo forcible and prevalent upon them, if feriously weighed, that they should not methinks be able to resist them.

Let us consider then in the first place, that tho' it be never so hard to get to heaven, yet it is possible; possible; and tho' there be but few that come thither, yet there are fome; and why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? there are many perfect and most glorious faints in heaven at this moment, which once were finful creatures upon earth as we now are but it feems the way thither was not fo narrow but they could walk in it, nor the gate so strait but they could pass through it, and why may not we as well as they? we have the same natures whereby we are capable of happiness as they had; we have the fame scriptures to direct us to it as they had; we have the same promises of assistances as they had, we have the same Saviour as they had, and why then may not we get to the same place where they are? is the way more narrow, and the gate more strait to us than it was to them? no furely, it is every way the fame; why then should we despair of ever attaining everlasting glory, feeing we are as capable of it as any one who hath yet attained it; it is true, if no mortal men had ever got to heaven, or God had faid none should ever come thither, then indeed it would be in vain for us to expect it, or to use any means to attain unto it; but seeing many of our brethren are already there, and many more will follow after them, and we are as capable of coming to them as any other, the straitness of the gate, the narrowness of the way, or the difficulty of getting thither, should never discourage us from endeavouring after it, no more than it did them, but rather make us the more diligent in the profecution of it: especially considering in the next place, that we are not only as M 3

yet in a capacity of getting to heaven, but we are all invited thither, and that by God himself; for he would have all men to be faved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth, I Tim. ii. 4. yea, he hath fworn by himself, saying, As I live saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live; and therefore calls upon us all, Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O kouse of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. hence it is that he fent his prophets to invite us, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, Isa. lv. 1. yea, he came down in his own perfon to earth, on purpose to invite us to heaven, and to direct us the way thither, Come to me, faith he, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest, Matt. xi. 26. For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John iii. 16. whence we may observe, that there is no exceptions made against any person whatsoever, nor by consequence against any of us. It is the will, yea, and command of God too, that we all turn from our evil ways and live, and that every foul amongst us walk in that narrow way that leads unto eternal bliss; and therefore if any of us do perish, our blood will be upon our own heads, our destruction is from our selves, Hos. xiii. 9. for it is nothing but the perverseness of our own wills, and the hardness, pride and obstinacy of our own hearts, that can keep any foul of us out of heaven, howfoever difficult it is to come thither. For God hath shewn how desirous he is

to have our company there, in that he is still pleased to grant us both the space and means of repentance. If he had no mind to have us faved, he could have shut us up long ago in hell; but he is fo far from that, that he doth not only as yet continue our abode on earth, and lengthen our tranquillity here, but he still vouchsafes unto us whatsoever is necessary, yea whatsoever can any ways conduce to our eternal happiness; we have his scriptures, we have his fabbaths, we have his ordinances, we have his facraments, we have his ministers, we have the promise of his Spirit, we have the overtures of Christ, and of all the merits of his death and paffion made unto us, and what can be defired more to make men happy? and yet as if all this had not been enough, he still continues calling upon us, exhorting, commanding, yea, and befeeching us most affectionately to turn, that our souls may live; for we his ministers, are embassadors to mankind for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; We pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20. And he hath fent me unto you that read this in a particular manner at this time, to call you back out of the broad way that leads to death, into the narrow way that leads to life and happiness; In bis name therefore I exhort, yea and befeech you by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service, Rom. xii. 1. Strive to enter in at the strait gate, and never leave until you have got possession of eternal glory.

Nor let us be discourag'd at any difficulties that we meet with in the way, for they will foon be over; howfoever hard and difficult any duty may feem at first, by use and custom it will foon grow easy. The worst is at first setting out, when once we have been used a-while to walk in this narrow way, we shall find it to be both easy and pleasant: for as the wife man tells us, the ways of wisdom or true piety, are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace, Prov. iii. 17. Though it be rough at first, by treading it will foon grow plain, we shall foon find the word of Christ to be true, that his yoke is easy, and his burden light, Matt. xi. 39. All is, but to be willing and obedient, and refolv'd upon it, to press through all duties and difficulties whatfoever to get to heaven, and then by the merits of Christ's passion, and the assistance of his grace, we need not fear but we shall come thither.

And verily altho' the way to heaven should prove not only narrow, but hedged in with bryars and thorns, so that we should meet with nothing but crosses and troubles in our going to it, yet heaven will make amends for all. For we may well reckon with the apostle, That the sufferings of this life are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us, Rom. viii. 18. So that whatsoever trouble we are at, whatsoever trouble we fuffer, in order to our attaining everlasting happiness, bears no proportion at all to the happiness we attain by it; which is so great, so exceeding great, that our tongues can neither express, nor our minds as

yet conceive it, confisting not only in the freedom from all evil, but also in the enjoyment of whatfoever is really and truly good; even whatfoever can any way conduce to the making us perfectly and compleatly happy: So that no duty can be too great to undertake, no trouble too heavy to undergo for it. Wherefore, that I may use the words of the apostle to my readers, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast and unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as you know that your labour shall not

be in vain in the Lord, I Cor. xv. 18.

By this time I hope we are all refolv'd within our felves, to follow our Saviour's counsel and advice, even to strive to enter in at the strait gate, and to walk in that narrow way that leads If we be not, we have just cause to sufto life. pect our selves to be in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity; but if we be refolv'd in good earnest, we cannot but be very solicitous to know what we must do in order to it; or how every one of us may enter in at the strait gate, fo as to be happy for ever? a question of the highest importance imaginable: so that it is absolutely necessary for every soul amongst us to be thoroughly refolv'd in it; for it concerns our life, our immortal and eternal life, and therefore I shall endeavour to resolve it in as few and perspicuous terms as possibly I can, that the meanest capacity may understand it. But I must take leave to fay beforehand, that our knowing of it will fignify nothing, unless we practise it, neither will you be ever the nearer heaven, because you know the way to it, unless you also walk in it.

And

And therefore the first thing that I shall propound, in order to our eternal falvation, is, that we should resolve immediately in the prefence of Almighty God, that we will for the future make it our great care, study and bufiness in this world, to feek the kingdom of God and the righteousness thereof, in the first place, according to our Saviour's advice and command, Mat. vi. 33. that we should not halt any longer between two opinions, and think to feek heaven and earth together, things diametrically opposite to one another. If we really think earth to be better than heaven, what need we trouble our selves any farther, than to heap up the riches, and to enjoy the pleasures of this world? But if we really think heaven to be better than earth, as all wife men must needs do, then let us mind that, and concern not our felves about this. We know what our Saviour told us long ago, No man can serve two masters, for either he will bate the one and love the other, or else he will hold with the one and despise the other: you cannot serve God and mammon, Matth. vii. 24. that is, in plain English, we cannot mind heaven and earth both together; for we can have but one grand and principal defign in the world, and therefore if our principal defign be to get wealth or any earthly enjoyment, we deceive our felves, if we think that we mind heaven at all. For that we can never properly be faid to do, until we mind it before all things whatfoever in the world befides; and let us not fay, or think within our felves, that this is an hard faying, for we may affure our felves it is no more than what we shall all find to be really true, and that never a soul of us shall ever know what heaven is, that doth not first prefer it before all things here below, and by consequence make it his principal, if not only de-

fign to get thither.

Supposing us therefore to be thus resolv'd within our felves, my next advice is, that we break off our former fins by repentance and shewing mercy to the poor, and that for the future we live not in the wilful commission of any known fin, nor yet in the wilful neglect of any known duty. Where it is evident I advise to no more than what all men know themfelves to be obliged to do; for I dare fay, there is none of us knows fo little, but what if he would but live up to what he knows, he could not but be both holy and happy. Let us but avoid what we our felves know to be fin, and do what we know to be our duty, and though our knowledge may not be so great as others, yet our piety may be greater and our condition better. But we must still remember, that one fin will keep us out of heaven as well as twenty; and therefore if we ever defire to come thither, we must not only do some or many things, but all things whatfoever is requir'd of us, to the best of our knowledge. I speak not this of my felf, but Christ himself hath told us the same before, even that we must keep the commandments, all the commandments, if we defire to enter into eternal life, Matth. xix. 16, 17. Not as if it was indispensably necessary to observe every punctilio and circumstance

stance of the moral law, for then no man could be faved; but that it must be both our stedfast resolution, and our chief study and endeavour to avoid whatsoever we know to be forbidden, and to perform whatsoever we know to be

commanded by God.

And though by this we shall make a fair progress in the narrow way to life, yet there is still another step behind, before we can enter in at the strait gate, and that is to believe in Iefus Christ, as our Saviour himself hath taught us, Matt. xix. 21. The fum of which duty in brief is this, That when we have done all we can in obedience to the moral law, yet we must still look upon our felves as unprofitable fervants, and not expect to be justified or faved by virtue of that obedience, but only by the merits of Christ's death and passion; humbly confiding, that in and through him, the defects of our obedience shall be remitted, our persons accepted, our natures cleanfed, and our fouls eternally faved. This is not only the principal but the only thing which Paul and Silas directed the keeper of the prison to, in order to his salvation, as comprehending all the rest under it, or at least supposing them, Acts xvi. 31.

Thus therefore, though obedience be the way, faith is the gate through which we must enter into life. But seeing the gate is strait as well as the way narrow, and it is as hard to believe in Christ as to observe the law, we must not think to do either by our own strength, but still implore the aid and assistance of almighty God, and depend upon him for it. For Christ

him-

himself saith, No man can come to me except the Father which hath sent me, draw him, John vi. 44. But we can never expect that he should draw us, unless we desire it of him. And therefore it must be our daily prayer and petition at the throne of grace, that God would vouch see us his special grace and assistance, without which I cannot see how any one that knows his own heart, can expect to be saved. But our comfort is, if we do what we can, God will hear our prayers, and enable us to do what otherwise we cannot; for he never yet did, nor ever will fail any man that sincerely endeavours to serve and honour him.

Lastly, Although we are to trust in God for the answer of our prayers in this particular, yet we must not expect that he should do it immediately from himself, but we must use those means which himself hath appointed whereby to work faith, and by consequence all other graces in us. Now the scriptures tell us that faith comes by hearing, Rom. x. 17. Wherefore if we defire to believe, so as to be saved, we must wait upon God in his publick ordinances, and there expect such influences of his grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to walk in the narrow way, and enter in at the strait gate that leads to life.

Thus I have shewn you in few terms, how to do the great work which you came into the world about, even how to get to heaven. For howsoever hard it is to come thither, let us but resolve, as we have seen, to mind it before all things else, fear God and keep his commands to the utmost of our power, believe in Christ

for the pardon of our fins, and the acceptance both of our persons and persormances; pray fincerely unto God, and wait diligently upon him for the affistance of his grace, to do what he requires from us: Let us do this, and we need not fear but our fouls shall live. If we leave this undone, we our felves shall be undone for ever. And therefore let me advise all to dally no longer in a matter of fuch consequence as this is, but now we know the way to heaven to turn immediately into it, and walk constantly in it. Though the way be narrow it is not long, and though the gate be strait it opens into eternal life. And therefore to conclude, let us remember we have now been told how to get to heaven, it is not in my power to force men thither whether they will or no, I can only shew them the way. It is their interest as well as duty to walk in it, which if they do, I dare affure them, in the name of Christ, it is not long but they will be admitted into the choir of heaven, to fing halleluja's for evermore.

## THOUGHTS

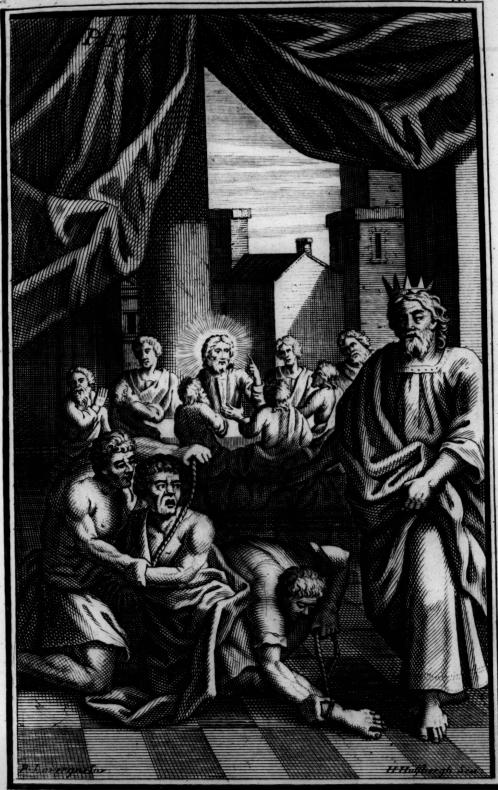
UPON

## The Imitation of CHRIST.



F we seriously consider with our selves that wonder of all wonders, that mystery of all mysteries, the incarnation of the Son of God, it may justly

ftrike us into astonishment, and an admiration what



Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer Darkness, &c. For many are call'd, but few are chosen. Math: 22. v: 13.14



what should be the reason and the end of it; why the great and glorious, the almighty and eternal God, would take our weak and finite nature into his infinite and incomprehenfible person; why the Creator of all things should himself become a creature; and he that made the world be himself made in it; why the supreme Being of all beings, that gives effence and existence to all things in the world, whose glory the heaven of heaven is not able to contain. should cloath himself with slesh and become a man, of the felf-fame nature and fubstance with us, who live and move, and have our being in him! certainly it was not upon any frivolous or ordinary account, that the most high God manifested himself to the sons of men in so wonderful and extraordinary a manner as this was. But he did it questionless upon some design that was as great and glorious as the act it felf. And if we would know what his end and defign in coming into the world was, the scripture assures us in general, that it was for the falvation of mankind, whose nature he assumed, For this is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, 1 Tim. i. 15. And he himself tells us, That God so loved the world, that he sent his only begotten Son, that who soever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Now for the accomplishment of this no less glorious than gracious design, there are two things which it was necessary he should do for us, whilst he was upon earth, even expiate our former fins, and direct unto holiness for the future; ture; both which he hath effected for us; the one by his death, and the other by his life.

For by his death, he hath paid that debt which we owed to God, having made compleat fatisfaction to God's justice for those sins, whereby we have incurred his displeasure: for death was threatned to all mankind in case of disobedience, and by confequence all mankind being disobedient, are obnoxious to it. Neither would it stand with the justice of God, to falsify his word, nor yet with his glory, to put up the injuries that we have committed against him, without having fatisfaction made unto him for But it being impossible that a finite creature should fatisfy for those fins which were committed against the infinite God: hence the infinite God was pleased to undertake it for us, even to fatisfy himself for those fins which were committed against him; which he did, by undergoing that death which he had threatned to us in our own nature, united to the person of his own and only Son, God co-equal, coeffential, co-eternal with himfelf, who is therefore said to be a propitiation for our fins, I John Neither can there any reason imaginable be alledged, why the Son of God himself should fuffer death, unless it was upon our account, and in our stead, whose nature he assumed, and in which he fuffer'd it. But not to infift upon that now. The humane nature in general, having thus fuffered that death in the person of the Son of God, which all mankind was otherwise bound to have undergone in their own persons; hence it comes

comes to pass, that we are all in a capacity of avoiding that death which we have deserved by our sins, if we do but rightly believe in Christ,

and apply his fufferings to our felves.

And as Christ by his death and passion hath thus fatisfied for our fins, fo hath he by his life and actions given us an exact pattern of true piety and virtue. And although I cannot fay it was the only, yet questionless one great end wherefore he continu'd fo long upon earth, and conversed so much amongst men, and that so many of his actions are deliver'd to us with fo many circumstances as they are, was, that we by his example, might learn how to carry and behave ourselves in this lower world. For as from that time to this, fo from the beginning of the world to that time, there had never been a man upon the face of the earth, that had liv'd so conformably to the law of God, that it was fafe or lawful for another to follow him in all things. For all flesh was corrupt, and the very best of men were still but men, subject to failures in their lives, as well as to errors in their judgments; yea, those very persons whom the scriptures record, and God himself attesteth to have been eminent in their generations for piety and justice, did oftentimes fail in both. Noah is afferted by God himself to have been righteous in his generation, Abraham to be the father of the faithful, Moses to be the meekest man upon earth, David to be a man after God's own heart, Solomon to have been the wifest man that ever liv'd, and Job to be a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed ewil: yet none

none of these most excellent persons, but had their vices as well as virtues. And it is observable, that the more eminent any were in piety, the more notorious sins God hath sometimes suffer'd them to slip into, to keep them humble. So that from the first to the second Adam, there never lived a man of whom it could be said, this man never sinned, never transgressed the laws of God, and therefore may in all things be

imitated by men.

But now as the first was made, the second Adam continu'd all along most pure and perfect, both in thought, word, and action: for he did no fin, neither was guile found in his mouth, 1 Pet. ii. 22. Never fo much as a vain thought ever fprang up in his most holy heart, not so much as an idle word ever proceeded out of his divine lips, nor fo much as an impertinent or frivolous action was ever performed by his facred and most righteous hands; his whole life being nothing else but one continued act of piety towards God, justice towards men, love and charity towards all. And as himself liv'd, so would he have all his disciples live whilst they are here below; and therefore enjoins them that go after him, not only to deny themselves, and take up their crosses, but also to follow, or imitate him, unto the utmost of their power, in their life and actions. So that he now expects that all those who profess themselves to be his disciples, do first deny themselves whatsoever is offensive unto him; and then that they take up their cross fo as to be ready and willing to do or fuffer any thing for him, that hath done and fuffered fo much

much as he hath for us. And then lastly, that they write after the copy that he hath fet them, and walk in the steps wherein he is gone before them; even that they follow him through all duties and difficulties whatfoever, fo as still to do unto the utmost of their power as he did, otherwise they in vain pretend to be his disciples. For he that faith he abideth in him, ought himself also to walk even as he walked, I John That is, he that professeth to believe in Jesus Christ, should live as he liv'd while he was upon earth. Hence St. Paul, a true disciple of Christ, saith, Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ, I Cor. xi. I. As he followed Christ, he would have others to follow him; but he would have them follow him, no farther than as he followed Christ.

It is true, we were bound to be holy and righteous in all our ways, whether we had ever heard of Christ's being so or no, the law of God first obliging us to be so; but howsoever; we have now an additional obligation upon us to be holy, As he who hath called us was holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15. For the scripture tells us expresly, that Christ bath left us an example that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. And our Saviour himself commands all that come to him, to learn of him, Mat. xi. 29, 30. And therefore we can never expect that he should own us for his disciples, unless we own him for our Lord and Master, so far as to obey and follow him; he having commanded all those that come to him, to deny themselves, take up their crosses, and follow him.

him. And feeing we all, I hope, defire to be christians indeed, as I have explained the two former of these duties, I shall now endeavour to give the true meaning of the latter too, that we may all so follow Christ here, as to come to him hereafter.

Now for the opening of this, we must know, that we neither can, or ought, to follow Christ in every thing he did when he was here below; for even whilft he was here below, he was still the most High and Mighty God, the same that he had been from eternity; and often manifested his power and glory to the fons of men, whilst he was converfing with them in their own natures, wherein it would be horrid prefumption for us to pretend to follow him. As for example, He knew the very thoughts of men, Matt. xii. 25. which I am fure is past our skill to do. Hence also he judged and censured others, Wa unto you, faith he, Scribes and Pharifees, hypocrites; for ye are like unto painted sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness, Matth. xxiii. 27, 28. But this we could not do though we might, not being able to fearch into others hearts, neither may we do it though we could, Christ himself having expresly commanded us the contrary; faying, Judge not that ye be not judged, Matth. vii. 1. Our Saviour also, as God, foretold future events, Luke xxi. 6. and wrought miracles, fuch as were clear demonstrations of his infinite power and Godhead; but in this he is to be believ'd and admired, not followed or imitated by us. Thus alfo

also when he sent his disciples to loose another man's colt, and bring him away, Luke xix. 30. that he did, as Lord and Sovereign of the world, or as the supreme Possessor, and universal Proprietor of all things; as when he commanded the Israelites to spoil the Egyptians, and carry away their jewels and raiment, for all things being his, he may give them to whom he pleafeth; and tho' it would have been a fin to have taken them away without his command, yet his command gave them a property in them, a right and title to them, and they had finned unless they had obeyed the command. So here, our Saviour fent for the colt, as if it had been his own, for fo really it was, as he is God, which he manifested himself to be at the same time, in that he inclined the hearts of the civil owners, thereof to let him go, only upon the disciples saying, that the Lord had need of him, Luke xix. 33, 34. But this he did, not for our example, but to shew forth his own power and glory.

There are some things also, which our blessed Saviour did as God-man, or as the mediator betwixt God and man, as his making atonement and satisfaction for the sins of mankind, his instituting offices and ordinances, and sacraments in his church, and the like; which having an immediate respect to his office of mediator, and being done upon that account, we neither may nor can imitate him in such things. But the things which he would have us to follow him in, are such, and such only, as he did as mere man, that had no immediate dependance upon him, or reference to, either his godhead or mediatorship.

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for he having honour'd our nature so far, as to take it into his own divine person, so to become really and truly man; as so, he did whatsoever man is bound to do, both as to God himfelf, and likewise as to men. And being absolutely perfect in all the faculties of his foul, and members of his body, he infinitely furpassed all other men, both in divine graces, and moral virtues; fo that as he never committed any one fin, fo neither did he ever neglect any one duty, which, as man, he was bound to perform, either to God or men, but still observed every punctilio and circumstance of the moral law; by which means he hath left us a compleat pattern of true and universal holiness, and hath enjoined us all to follow it.

Hoping therefore, that all who profess themfelves to be the friends and disciples of Jesus Christ, desire to manifest themselves to be so, by following both his precepts and example, I shall give the reader a short narrative of his life and actions, wherein we may all fee what true piety is, and what real christianity requires of us; and may not content our felves, as many do, with being professors, and adhering to parties or factions amongst us, but strive to be thorough christians, and to carry our selves as such, by walking as Christ himself walked; which, that we may at least know how to do, looking upon Christ as mere man, I shall shew how he did, and, by consequence, how we ought to carry our felves both to God and man; and what graces and virtues he exercised all along, for our example and imitation.

Now

Now for our more clear and methodical proceeding, in a matter of such consequence as this is, I shall begin with his behaviour towards men, from his childhood to his death.

First therefore, when he was a child of twelve years of age, it is particularly recorded of him, that he was subject or obedient to his parents, his real mother, and reputed father, Luke ii. 51. It is true, heknew at that time, that God himfelf was his father, for, said he, wift ye not that I must be about my father's business, ver. 49. And knowing God to be his father, he could not but know likewise that he was infinitely above his mother; yea, that she could never have born him, had not he himself first made and supported her. Yet howsoever, tho' as God, he was father to her, yet as man, she was mother to him; and therefore he honour'd and obey'd both her and him to whom she was espoused, neither did he only respect his mother whilst he was here, but he took care of her too when he was going hence; yea, all the pains that he suffered upon the cross, could not make him forget his duty to her that bore him; but feeing her standing by the cross, as himself hung on it, he committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, who took her to his own home, John xix. 27. Now as our Saviour did, so are we bound to carry our selves to our earthly parents, whatfoever their temper or condition be in this world. Though God hath bleffed some of us, perhaps, with greater estates then ever he blessed them, yet we must not think our felves above them, nor be at all the less respectful to them. Christ, we see, was infinitely N 4

infinitely above his mother, yet as she was his mother, he was both subject and respectful to her. He was not ashamed to own her as she stood by the cross, but in the view and hearing of all there present, gave his disciple a charge to take care of her; leaving us an example, that such amongst us as have parents, provide for them, if they need it, as well as for our children, both while

we live, and when we come to die.

And as he was to his natural, fo was he to his civil parents, the magistrates under which he lived, submissive and faithful; for though, as he was God, he was infinitely above them in heaven, yet, as he was man, he was below them on earth; having committed all civil power into their hands, without referving any at all for himfelf. So that tho' they receiv'd their commission from him, yet now himself could not act without receiving a commission from them. And therefore having no commission from them to do it, he would not entrench fo much upon their privilege and power, as to determine the controverfy betwixt the two brethren contending about their inheritance; Man, faith he, who made me a judge or a divider over you? Luke xii. 14. And to shew his submission to the civil magistrate, as highly as possibly he could, rather than offend them, he wrought a miracle to pay the tax which they had charged upon him, Matth. xvii. 27, and when the officers were fent to take him, tho' he had more than twelve legions of angels at his service, to have fought for him if he pleased, yet he would not employ them, nor fuffer his own disciples to make any resistance, Matth. XXVI. who called themselves christians, have acted quite contrary to our blessed Saviour in this particular, I hope better things of my readers, even that they will behave themselves more like to Christ, who tho' he was the supreme Governour of the world, yet would not resist, but submitted to the civil power, which himself had entrusted men withal.

Moreover, although whilst he was here, he was really not only the best, but greatest man upon earth, yet he carried himself to others with that meekness, humility, and respect, as if he had been the least: as he never admired any man for his riches, so neither did he despise any man for his poverty; the poor man and rich were all alike to him. He was as lowly and respectful to the lowest, as he was to the highest that he conversed with. He affected no titles of honour, nor gaped after popular air, but fubmitted himself to the meanest services that he could for the good of others, even to the washing his own disciples feet; and all to teach us, that we can never think too lowly of our felves, nor do any thing that is beneath us: propounding himself as our example, especially in this particular, Learn of me, faith he, for I am meek and lowly in heart, Matt. xi. 29.

His humility also was the more remarkable, in that his bounty and goodness to others was so great, for he went about, doing good, Acts x. 38. wheresoever ye read he was, you still read of some good work or other which he did there. Whatsoever company he conversed with,

they still went better from him than they came unto him, if they came out of a good end. By him, as himself said, the blind received their fight, and the lame walked, the lepers were cleansed, and the deaf heard, the dead were raised up, and the poor had the gospel preached unto them, Matth. xi. 5. yea, it is observable, that we never read of any person whatsoever, that came unto him, defiring any real kindness or favour of him, but he still received it, and that whether he was friend or foe. For indeed, though he had many inveterate and implacable enemies in the world, yet he bare no malice against them, but express'd as much love and favour to them, as to his greatest friends. Infomuch, that when they had gotten him upon the cross, and fastened his hands and feet upon it, in the midst of all the pain and torment which they put him to, he still pray'd for them, Luke xxii. 34.

Oh! how happy, how bleffed a people should we be, could we but follow our bleffed Saviour in this particular! how well would it be with us, could we but be thus good and loving to one another, as Christ was to all, even his most bitter enemies: we may assure our selves, it is not only our misery, but our sin too, unless we be so. And our sin will be the greater, now we know our master's pleasure, unless we do it. And therefore let all such amongst us as desire to carry our selves as Christ himself did, and as becometh his disciples in the world, begin here.

Be fubmissive and obedient to our parents and governours, humble in our own fight, despise none none, but be charitable, loving, and good to all. By this shall all men know, that we are

Christ's disciples indeed.

Having thus feen our Saviour's carriage towards men, we shall now consider his piety and devotion towards God, not as if it was poffible for me to express the excellency and perfection of those religious acts which he performed continually within his foul to God, every one of his faculties being as entire in it self, and as perfect in its acts, as it was first made or design'd There was no darkness, nor so much as gloominess in his mind, no error or mistake in his judgment, no bribery or corruption in his conscience, no obstinacy or perverseness in his will, no irregularity nor diforder in his affections, no spot, no blot, no blemish, not the least imperfection or infirmity in his whole foul. And therefore, even whilft his body was on earth. his head and heart were still in heaven. For he never troubled his head, nor fo much as concerning himself about any thing here below, any farther than to do all the good he could, his thoughts being wholly taken up with confidering how to advance God's glory, and man's eternal happiness. And as for his heart, that was the altar on which the facred fire of divine love was always burning, the flames whereof continually ascended up to heaven, being accompany'd with the most ardent and fervent desires of, and delight in, the chiefest Good.

But it must not be expected, that I should give an exact description of that eminent and most perfect holiness, which our blessed Saviour was

inwardly

inwardly adorn'd with, and continually imployed in; which I am as unable to express, as defirous to imitate. But howsoever, I shall endeavour to mind the reader in general of such acts of piety and devotion, which are particularly

recorded, on purpose for our imitation.

First, therefore, it is observed of our Saviour, that from a child he increased in wisdom, as he did in stature, Luke ii. 52. Where, by wisdom, we are to understand the knowledge of God, and of divine things. For our Saviour having taken our nature into his person, with all its frailties and infirmities, as it is a created being, he did not in that nature presently know all things which were to be known. It is true, as God, he then knew all things as well as he had from all eter-But we are now speaking of him as man, like one of us in all things except fin. But we continue some considerable time after we are born, before we know any thing, or come to the use of our reasons; the rational soul not being able to exert or manifest it self, until the natural phlegm, or radical moisture of the body, which in infants is predominant, be so digested, that the body be rightly qualified, and its organs fitted for the foul to work upon, and to make use of. And though our Saviour, questionless, came to the use of his reason, as man, far fooner than we are wont to do, yet we must not think that he knew all things as foon as he was born; for that the nature he affumed was not capable of; neither could he then be faid, as he is, to increase in wisdom, for where there is a perfection, there can be no increase.

But here, before we proceed farther, it will be necessary to answer an objection which some may make against this. For, if our Saviour, as man, knew not all things, then he was not perfect, nor absolutely free from sin, ignorance it

felf being a fin.

To this, I have these things to answer. First, It is no fin for a creature to be ignorant of some things, because it is impossible for a creature to know all things; for to be omniscient is God's prerogative, neither is a creature capable of it, because he is but finite; whereas the knowledge of all things, or omniscience, is it self an infinite act, and therefore to be perform'd only by an infinite Being. Hence it is, that no creature in the world ever was, or ever could be, made omniscient; but there are many things, which Adam, in his integrity, and the very angels themfelves, are ignorant of; as our Saviour, speaking of the day of judgment, saith, Of that day and bour knoweth no man, no not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father, Mark xiii. 32. But the angels are never the less perfect because they know not this. Nay, it is observable, that the Son himself, as man, knew it not, neither, faith he, the Son, but the Father; and if he knew it not then, much less was it necessary for him to know it when a child.

Secondly, As to be ignorant of some things, is no sin, so neither is any ignorance at all sin, but that whereby a man is ignorant of what he is bound to know. For all sin is the transgression of a law. And therefore if there be no law obliging

obliging me to know such or such things, I do not sin by being ignorant of them, for I transgress no law, now, though all men are bound by the law of God, to know him, and their duty to him; yet infants, so long as infants, are not, neither can be, obnoxious or subject to that law, they being in a natural incapacity, yea, impossibility to perform it; but as they become by degrees capable of knowing any thing, they are obliged, questionless, to know him first from

whom they receive their knowledge.

And thus it was that our bleffed Saviour perfectly fulfilled the law of God in that, although he might still continue ignorant of many things; yet howsoever, he all along knew all that he was bound to know, and as he grew, by degrees, more and more capable of knowing any thing, so did he increase still more in true wisdom, or in the knowledge of God; so that by that time he was twelve years old, he was able to dispute with the great doctors and learned rabbies amongst the Jews; and after that, as he grew in stature, so did he grow in wisdom too, and in favour both with God and man.

And verily, although we did not follow our bleffed Saviour in this particular when we were children, we ought howfoever to endeavour it now we are men and women, even to grow in wisdom, and every day add something to our spiritual stature, so as to let never a day pass over our heads, without being better acquainted with God's goodness to us, or our duty to him. And by this example of our Saviour's growing in wisdom when a child, we should also learn to bring

bring up our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and not strive so much to make them rich, as to use all means to make them wise and good; that they may do as their Saviour did, even grow in wisdom and in stature, and in the savour both of God and man.

And as our Saviour grew in wisdom when a child, so did he use and manifest it when he came to be a man, by devoting himself wholly unto the service of the living God, and to the exercise of all true grace and virtue, wherein his bleffed foul was fo much taken up, that he had neither time nor heart to mind those toys and trifles which filly mortals upon earth are fo much apt to dote on. It is true, all the world was his, but he had given it all away to others, not referving for himself so much as an house to put his head in, Matth. viii. 20. And what money he had hoarded up, you may gather from his working a miracle to pay his tribute or poll-money, which came not to much above a shilling. Indeed he came into the world, and went out again, without ever taking any notice of any pleasures, honours, or riches in it, as if there had been no fuch thing here; as really there was not, nor ever will be: All the pomp and glory of this deceitful world having no other being or existence, but only in our distemper'd fancies and imaginations; and therefore our Saviour, whose fancy was found, and his imagination untainted, look'd upon all the world, and the glory of it, as not worthy to be look'd upon, feeing nothing in it wherefore it should be defired. And therefore, instead of spending his time

time in the childish pursuit of clouds and shadows, he made the service of God not only his business, but his recreation too, his food as well as work. It is my meat, faith he, to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work, John This was all the riches, honours, and iv. 34. pleasures which he sought for in the world, even to do the will of him that fent him hither, and to finish the work which he came about, and so he did before he went away; Father, I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou sentest me to do, John xvii. 4. therefore we would be Christ's disciples, so as to follow him, we see what we must do, and how we must behave and carry our selves whilst we are here below; we must not spend our time, nor throw away our precious and short lived days upon the trifles and impertinences of this transient world, as if we came hither for nothing else, but to rake and scrape up a little dust and dirt together, or to wallow our selves like swine, in the mire of carnal pleasures and delights. No; we may affure our felves we have greater things to do, and far more noble defigns to carry on whilst we continue in this vale of tears, even to work out our salvation with fear and trembling, and to make our calling and election sure, and to serve God here, so as to enjoy him for ever. This is the work we came about, and which we must not only do, but do it too with pleasure and delight, and never leave until we have accomplish'd it: we must make it our only pleasure to please God, account it our only honour to honour him, and esteem his love love and favour to be the only wealth and riches that we can enjoy: We must think our selves no farther happy, than we find our selves to be true and holy, and therefore devote our lives wholly to him, in whom we live. This is to live as Christ lived, and by consequence as Christive as Christived.

stians ought to do.

I might here instance in several other acts of piety and devotion, which our Saviour was not only eminent for, but continually exercised himself in, as his humble and perfect submission and resignation of his own will to God's, his most ardent love unto him, and zeal for him, as also his firm and stedfast trust and considence on him; so that nothing could ever disquiet or discompose his mind, but still his heart was fixed, trusting in the Lord. In all which, it is both our duty and interest to follow him; our happiness, as well as holiness, consisting in our dependence

upon God, and inclinations to him.

But we should do well to observe withal, that our Saviour performed external, as well as inward worship and devotion unto God; particularly, we often find him praising God, and praying unto him, and that with his eyes lift up to heaven in a most humble and reverential posture, John xvii. 1. Luke xxii. 4. Mat. xxvi. 39. Yea, when he was to chuse and ordain some of his disciples to the work of the ministry, and to succeed him after his departure, under the name of apostles, he spent the night before in prayer to God, Luke vi. 12. I confess the words there used, in The megatory is Gost, will scarce admit of that interpretation or exposition, signifying rather in a strict sense, that he

went into a place appointed for prayer, which was usually called Theroeuxi, a place of prayer, which kind of places were very frequent in Judaa, and some of them continu'd till Epiphanius's time, as himself afferts; and they were only plots of ground enclosed with a wall, and open above, and were ordinarily, if not always, upon mountains, whither the Jews used to refort to pray together in great multitudes. And this feems to be the proper meaning of thefe words, where our Saviour is faid to go into a mountain, and to continue all night, ar Til wesσευχή πο Θεκ, in one of those proseucha's of God, a place dedicated to his service. Yet howsoever, we cannot suppose but that he went thither to do what the place, whither he went, was defigned for, even to pray. And by consequence, that feeing he staid there all night, questionless he spent the whole night in prayer and meditation, in order to fo great a work, as the ordaining his apostles was.

Here therefore is another copy which our master Christ hath set us to write after, a lesson that all must learn and practise, that would be his disciples. Though we ordinarily converse with nothing but dirt and clay, and with our sellow worms on earth, yet as Christ did, so should we often retire from the tumults and bustles of the world, to converse with him that made us; both to praise him for the mercies we have received, and to pray unto him for what we want; only we shall do well to have a care that we do not perform so solemn a duty as this is, after a careless and perfunctory manner, be-

cause

cause none sees us but God; for his seeing us. is infinitely more than if all the world besides should see us; and we must still remember, that prayer is the greatest work that a creature can be ingaged in, and therefore to be perform'd with the greatest seriousness, reverence, and earnestness, that possibly we can raise up our spirits to. And besides our daily devotions, which we owe, and ought to pay to God, whenfoever we fet upon any great and weighty bufinefs, we must be sure to follow our Saviour's steps, in fetting fome time apart, proportionably to the business we undertake, wherein to ask God's counsel, and defire his direction and bleffing in the most ferious and folemn manner that possibly I need not tell the reader what benefit we shall receive by this means, none of us that shall try it, but will soon find it by experience.

I shall observe only one thing more concerning our Saviour's devotion, and that is, that although he took all occasions to instruct or admonish his disciples and followers, whether in the fields or upon the mountains, or in private houfes, even wherefoever he could find an opportunity to do it; yet upon the fabbath days he always frequented the publick worship of God; he went into the fynagogues, places appointed for publick prayers, and reading and hearing of the word, a thing, which I fear, many amongst us do not think of, or, at least, not rightly confider it; for if they did, they would not dare, methinks, to walk fo directly contrary to our bleffed Saviour in this particular, for St. Luke tells us, that when be came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath-day, Luke iv. 16. From whence none of us, but may easily observe, that our Saviour did not go into a synagogue, or church, by the by, to see what they were doing there; neither did he happen to go in by chance upon the sabbath-day, but it was his custom and constant practice to do so, even to go every sabbath-day to the publick ordinance, there to join with the congregation, in performing their publick service and devo-

tions to Almighty God.

And here I must take leave to say, that was there no other law, nor any other obligations upon us (as there be many) to frequent the publick worship of God, this practice and example of our bleffed Saviour doth fufficiently and effectually oblige us all, to a conftant attendance upon the publick ordinance. For as we are christians, and profess our selves to be his disciples, we are all bound to follow him; he commands us here, and elsewhere to it; and certainly there is nothing that we can be oblig'd to follow him in, more than in the manner of his worshipping God. And therefore whosoever out of any humour, fancy, or floathfulness, shall presume to neglect the publick worship of God, he doth not only act contrary unto Christ's example, but transgresses also his command, that enjoins him to follow that example. What they who are guilty of this, will have to answer for themselves, when they come to stand before Christ's tribunal, I know not. But this I know, that all those who profess themselves to be Christians,

Christians, should follow Christ in all things that they can, and by consequence in this particular,

and that they fin who do not.

But in whatfoever other things we may fail, I know the generality of us do herein follow our Saviour's fteps, that we are usually present at the publick worship of God; but then I hope this is not all that we follow him in, but that as we follow him to the publick ordinances, fo we do likewise in our private devotions, yea, and in our behaviour both to God and man. that we may the better do, I have endeavour'd to shew wherein, especially, we ought to follow Christ, in being obedient to our parents, subject to our governours, lowly to the lowest, loving and charitable unto all; as also, in growing in wisdom and the knowledge of God, in contemning the world, in devoting our selves wholly to the service of God, in resigning our wills to his, in loving of him, in trufting on him above all things else, in daily praying unto God, and frequenting his publick ordinances; to which I may also add, in denying our selves, and taking up our crosses, which himself hath done before us, as well as required of us.

What now remains, but that seeing the steps wherein our Saviour walked, we should all resolve to walk together in them? And I hope that I need not use arguments to persuade any to it; it is enough, one would think, that Christ himself, whose name we bear, expects and commands it from us. And in that, the sum of all our religion consisteth, in obeying and following Christ, the circumstances of whose life are

recorded.

recorded, on purpose that we may imitate him unto the utmost of our power, not only in the matter, but manner of our actions, even in the circumstances, as well as in the substance of them.

But this, I dare fay, we all both know and believe, even that it is our duty to follow Christ: and therefore it is a fad, a difmal thing to confider, that amongst them that know it, there are fo few that do it: but even those that go under the name of Christians themselves, do more generally follow the beafts of the field, or the very fiends of hell, rather than Christ our Saviour. For all covetous worldlings, that look no higher than earth, and all luxurious epicures, that labour after no other but fenfual pleasures, whom do they imitate, but the beafts that perish? and as for the proud and arrogant, the deceitful and malicious seducers of their brethren, and oppressors of their neighbours, all backbiters, and false accusers, all deriders of religion, and apostates from it, they are all of their father the devil, and his works they do. And if all fuch persons should be taken from amongst us, how few would be left behind that follow Christ! very few indeed! but I hope there would be fome. And oh! that all who read this would be in the number of them, even that they would all from this day forward, refolve to come as near our bleffed Saviour in all their actions, both to God and man, as possibly they can; which if we once did, what holy, what happy lives should we then lead? how should we antedate both the work and joys of heaven? and how certain should we be to be there e'er long, where Christ that is the pattern of our lives here, will be the portion of our souls for ever.

Thus I have shewn what Christ requires of those who would be his disciples, enjoining them to deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow him. And now I have done my duty in explaining these words, 'tis all my readers, as well as mine, to practife them, which I heartily wish we would all resolve to do; and I must fay, it highly concerns us all to do so, for we can never be fav'd but by Christ, nor by him, unless we be his disciples; neither can we be his disciples, unless we do what here is required of us. And therefore if we care not whether we be faved or no, we may think no more of these things, nor trouble our heads about them; but if we really defire to come to heaven, let us remember he who alone can bring us thither, hath told us, that we must deny our selves, take up our cross, and follow him.

## THOUGHTS

UPON

## Our Call and Election.

ANY are called, (saith our Saviour, Matth. xxii. 14.) but few chosen. Oh dreadful sentence, who is able to hear it without trembling and astonishment! if he had said, that of all the men that are born in-O 4

to the world, there are but few faved, this would not have ftruck fuch a fear and horror into us; for we might still hope that though Turks, Jews, and Heathens, which are far the greatest part of the world, should all perish, yet are few, in comparison of them, who are baptized into his name, who profess his gospel, who enjoy his ordinances, who are admitted to his facraments, that all we who are called to him, might be chosen and faved by him; but that of those very persons who are called, there are but few chosen: what a sharp and terrible fentence is this! who can bear it? especially confidering by whom it was pronounc'd, even by Christ himself. If a mere man had spoken it, we might hope it was but an human error; if an angel had utter'd it, we might think it poffible he might be mistaken; but that Christ himfelf, the eternal fon of God, who is truth and infallibility it felf, that he should affert it, that he who laid down his own life to redeem ours, that he who came into the world on purpose to call and fave us, that he in whom alone it is possible for us to be chosen to falvation, that he should fay, Many are called, but few chosen. This is an hard faying indeed, which may justly make our ears to tingle, and our hearts to tremble at the hearing of it. And yet we fee, our Saviour here expresly faith it, and not only here neither, but again, Matt. xx. 16. Whence we may gather, that it is a thing he would have us often think of, and a matter of more than ordinary importance, in that he did not think it enough to tell us of it once, but he repeated it in the same words again, that we may be sure to remember it, and take especial notice of it, that

many are called, but few chosen.

In which words, that we may understand our Saviour's meaning aright, we must first confider the occasion of them in this place, which in brief was this: our Saviour, according to the custom that obtain'd in those days amongst the wife men of the East, delighting to use parables, thereby to represent his heavenly doctrine more clearly to the understanding of his hearers, in this chapter compares the kingdom of God to a certain king that made a marriage for his Son, and fent his fervants to call them that were bidden to the wedding, ver. 2, 3. Where, by the king, he means the eternal God, the universal monarch of the world, who intending to make a marriage betwixt his Son and the church, stiled the spouse of Christ, he first sent to his guests before bidden, even the Jews, the feed of Abraham his friend, and at that time his peculiar people. But they not hearkening to the first invitation, he fends to them again, ver. 4. yet they still made light of it, having, it feems, as we most have, other business to mind, and therefore went their way, some to their farms, others to their merchandize, ver. 5. By which our Saviour intimates, that one great reason why men accept not of the overtures of grace made unto them in the gospel, is, because their minds are taken up with the cares of this world, looking upon their farms, their trades and merchandize, as things of greater moment than heaven and eternal glory. Yea, some of them took the servants which were sent

to invite them, and treated them spightfully, and flow them, ver. 6. Why, what is the matter? what injury have the servants, the prophets, the apostles, or the ministers of Christ done them? what! do they come to oppress them, to take their estates from them? to disgrace, or bring them into bondage? no, they only come to invite them to a marriage feast, to tender them the highest comforts and refreshments imaginable both for And is this all the retheir fouls and bodies. compence they give them for their kindness, not only to refuse it, but to abuse them that bring it? well might this glorious king be angry and incenfed at fuch an affront offered him as this was; and therefore he fent forth his armies and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city, ver. 7, as we all know he did to the murdering Yews, who foon after this were destroyed, and their royal city Jerusalem burnt. But now the feast is prepared, shall there be none to eat it? yes, for feeing they who were first bidden were not worthy to partake of his dainties, he orders his fervants to go into the high ways and bid as many as they could find to the marriage, ver. 6, 9. the Yews having refused the gospel, God sends to invite the Gentiles to it, who hitherto had been reckoned aliens to the commonwealth of Israel, strangers to the covenant of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world, Eph. ii. 12. But now they also are bidden to the wedding, they are called to Christ, and invited to partake of all the privileges of the gospel. For the servants having received the command, went out into the bigh-way, even into all the by-places and corners of the world, and gathered together all as many as they found both bad and good, and the wedding was furnished with guests, ver. 10. But amongst these too, when the king came to fee his guests, he saw one that had not on a wedding garment, ver. 11. Under which one, are represented all of the same kind, who have not on their wedding garments, that is, who walk not worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, not being clothed with humility, faith, and other graces suitable for a christian. which, notwithstanding they were invited, yea, and came into upon their invitation, yet they are cast out again into utter darkness, Mat. xxii. 12, 13. and then he adds, for many are called, but few chosen; as if he should have said, the Jews were called but would not come, the Gentiles are called, they come, but fome of them are cast out again; so that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen. For many are called, but few chosen.

Which short, but pithy saying, of our blessed Saviour, that we may rightly understand, we shall first consider the former part of it, many are called, and then the latter, but few chosen. That we may apprehend the full meaning of the first part of this proposition, many are called, there

are three things to be confider'd.

1. What is here meant by being called.

2. How men are called.

3. How it appears that many are called.

As for the first, what we are here to understand by being called. We must know that this is meant only of God's voice to mankind, making known known his will and pleasure to them, calling upon them to act accordingly; and so inviting them to his service here, and to the enjoyment of his presence hereafter.

But to explain the nature of it more particularly, we must consider the terminus aquo, and the terminus ad quod; what it is God calls us from, and what it is he calls us to, both which

we shall speak to, jointly or together.

1. He calls us from darkness to light, from error and ignorance, to truth and knowledge: as he made us rational and knowing creatures at first, fo he would have us to be again, fo as to understand and know him that made us, and that gave us the power of understanding and knowing; and not employ the little knowledge we have, only about the affairs of our bodies, our trades, and callings in this world, nor yet in learning arts and sciences only, but principally about the concerns of our immortal fouls, that we may know him that is the true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath fent; without which, all our other knowledge will avail us nothing. We are still in the dark, and know not whither we are going; out of which dark, and by confequence, uncomfortable, as well as dangerous estate, God of his infinite mercy is pleas'd to call us, that we should show forth the praises of him who bath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light, 1 Pet. ii. 9.

2. God calls us from superstition and idolatry, to serve and worship him. For we are called to turn from idols, to serve the living and trua God, 1 Thess. i. 9. Thus he call'd Abraham out

of Chaldea, and his posterity the Israelites out of Egypt, places of idolatry, that they might ferve and worship him, and him alone. Thus he called our ancestors of this nation, out of their heathenish superstitions, to the knowledge and worship of himself, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord. And thus he call'd upon us to flee from idolatry, I Cor. x. 14. Not only from the heathenish or popish, but from all idolatry, whatfoever, and by confequence from covetoufness, which God himself tells us in plain terms is idolatry, Col. iii. 5. And fo indeed is our allowing our felves in any known fin whatfoever; for we idolize it by fetting it up in our hearts and affections, instead of God; yea, and bow down to it, and ferve it, tho' not in our bodies, yet in our fouls, which is the highest kind of idolatry which God calls us from.

3. Hence he also calls us from all manner of fin and prophaneness, to holiness and piety, both in our affections and actions. For as the apostle faith, God bath not called us to uncleanness, but to holiness, 1 Thes. iv. 7. Where, by uncleanness, he means all manner of lusts and corruptions, which defile the foul, and make it unclean and impure in the fight of God. These God doth not call us to, but from: it is holiness and universal righteousness that he calls us to, and commands us to follow: this is the great thing that Christ in his gospel calls for, For the grace of God, which is in his gospel, bath now appeared to all men, teaching us, that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world, Tit. ii.

11, 12. He now commandeth all men every where to repent, and to turn to God, Acts xvii. 30. Hence he is said to have called us with a boly calling, 2 Tim. i. 9. And as he who hath called us is holy, so ought we to be boly in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. i. 15. Thus therefore we all are called to be a holy people, a people zealous of good works, a people devoted wholly to the service of the living God. In brief, we are called to be faints, a people confecrated unto God; and therefore, as every vessel in the temple was holy, fo we being called to be the temples of the Holy Ghost, every thing in us should be holy, our thoughts should be holy, our affections holy, our words holy, our defires holy; every faculty of our fouls, every member of our bodies, and every action of our lives should be holy; every thing within us, every thing about us, every thing that comes from us should be holy, and all because our calling is holy; and we ought to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, Eph. iv. 1.

4. God calls us from carnal and temporal things, to mind heaven and eternal glory. He fees and observes how eager we are in prosecuting of this world's vanities, and therefore calls upon us to leave doting upon such transitory and unsatisfying trisles, and to mind the things that belong to our everlasting peace; not to be conformed to this world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may prove what is that good, that acceptable, and perfect will of God, Rom. xii. 2. To set our affections upon things above, and not upon things that are upon earth,

earth, Col. iii. 2. To feek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness in the first place, Matth. vi. 33. Hence it is stilled an heavenly calling, Heb.iii. 1. and an high calling, Phil. iii. 14, because we are called by it to look after high and heavenly things. He that made us, hath so much kindness for us, that it pities him to see us moil and toil, and spend our strength and labour, about such low and pitiful, such impertinent and unnecessary things, which himself knows can never satisfy us, and therefore he calls and invites us to himself, and to the enjoyment of his own perfections, which are able to fill and satiate our immortal souls.

5. Hence lastly, we are called from misery and danger, to the state of happiness and felicity. As he called Lot out of Sodom, when fire and brimstone was ready to fall upon it, so he calls us from the world and fin, because otherwife wrath and fury will fall upon our heads. Or as he called Noah into the ark, to preserve him from the overflowing flood, so he calls us into his service, and to the faith of his Son, that fo we may escape that flood of misery which will fuddenly drown the impenitent and unbelieving world. And therefore we must not think that he calls and invites us to him, because he stands in need of us, or wants our fervice; no, it is not because he cannot be happy without us, but because we cannot be happy without him, nor in him neither, unless we come unto him. This is the only reason why he calls us so earnestly to him, For as I live, faith the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked wicked turn from his way and live: Turn ye, turn ye, for why will ye die, O house of Ifrael! Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Let us not stand paufing upon it, and confidering whether we shall hearken to God's call or no, nor fay feverally within our felves, how shall I part with my profits? how shall I deny my self the enjoyment of my fenfual pleasures? how shall I for sake my darling and beloved fins? but rather fay, how shall I abide the judgment of the great God? how shall I escape, if I neglect so great salvation as I am now called and invited to? for we may affure our felves, this is the great and only end why God calls fo pathetically upon us to come unto him, that fo we may be deliver'd from his wrath, and enjoy his love and favour.

Thus we see what it is that God calls mankind both from and to; he calls them from darkness to light, from idolatry to true religion, from sin to holiness, from earth to heaven, and from the deepest misery to the highest happiness that they are capable of. The next thing to be consider'd, is, how God is pleased to call us; for

which we must know that.

1. He hath vouchfafed to call some with his own mouth, as I may so speak, even by immediate revelations from himself. Thus he call'd Abraham and Moses, and several of the patriarchs of the Old Testament. And thus he called Paul, Christ himself calling from heaven to him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? Acts ix. 4. And it is observable, that whosoever were thus called, they always obeyed. But this is not the calling here spoken of.

2. God calls all mankind by his works and providences. All the creatures in the world, are as fo many tongues declaring the wisdom, power, goodness, and glory of God unto us, and so call upon us to praise, honour, and obey him. And all his providences have their several and distinct voices; his mercies bespeak our affections, and his judgments our fear. Hear ye, saith he, the rod, and who hath appointed it, Mich. vi. 9. The rod it seems hath a voice, which we are bound to hear. But though many, yea, all the world be called this way, yet neither is this the calling our Saviour means, when he saith,

Many are called, but few chosen.

3. Lastly, Therefore God hath called many by the ministry of his word, and of his servants the prophets, the apostles, and their successors declaring it, and explaining it to them. God spake to our fathers, by the prophets, rising up early, and fending them to call finners to repentance, by shewing them their sins, and the dangerous consequents of them. As when he fent his prophet Isaiah, he bids him Cry aloud, Spare not, lift up thy voice as a trumpet, and Shew my people their transgressions, and the house of Jacob their sins, Isaiah lviii. 1. And they being convinc'd of, and humbled for their fins, then he fent his prophets to invite them to accept of grace and pardon from him, faying in the language of the same prophet, Ho! every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that bath no money, come ye, buy and eat; yea, come buy wine and milk without money and without price, Isaiah lv. 1, 2, 3. And God having thus

thus at fundry times, and in divers manners fpoken in time-past unto the fathers by the prophets, bath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, Heb. i. 1, 2. who therefore faid with his own mouth, that he came not to call the righteous, but finners to repentance, Matth. ix. 13. Hence, as foon as ever he enter'd upon his ministry, he called to mankind, faying, Repent, and believe the gospel, Mark i. 15. and, Come unto me all ye that labour, and are beavy laden, Matth. xi. 28. And when he was to depart hence, he left order with his apostles, to go and call all nations, and teach them what he had commanded, promising that himself would be with them to the end of the world, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. By virtue therefore of this commission, not only the apostles themselves, but all succeeding ministers in all ages to the end of the world, are fent to call mankind to embrace the gospel, and to accept of the terms propounded in it. So that when we his ministers preach unto them, or call upon them to repent and turn to God, they must not think we come in our own name; for as the apostle tells the Corinthians, We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us; we pray you in Christ's stead be ye reconciled to God, 2 Cor. v. 20. Hence in Scripture we are called also unquest beralds, and our Office is angular to proclaim as keralds, the will and pleasure of Almighty God unto mankind, to offer peace and pardon to all that have rebelled against our lord and master the king of heaven, if they will now come in, and submit themselves unto him; if not, in a most solemn and
dreadful manner, to denounce his wrath and
heavy displeasure against them. So that as the
angel was sent to call Lot out of Sodom, when
the Lord was going to rain fire and brimstone
from heaven upon it; so God being ready every moment to shower down his sury and vengeance upon the impenitent and unbelieving
world, he sends us to call men out of it, to open
their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to
light, from the power of Satan unto God, Acts
xxvi. 18. and to invite them to his court, to live

with him and be happy for ever.

And that this is the proper meaning of our bleffed Saviour, in this place, where he faith, many are called, is plain from the parable whereon these words are grounded; where the king is faid to have fent his fervants to call the guests which were bidden to the marriage feast, and put words into their mouths, telling them what to fay, ver. 4. as he hath given us also instructions how to call and invite mankind in his holy word. And when of the many which were called, there would but few come; hence our Saviour uttered this expression, that many are called, but few chosen. From whence it is clear and obvious, that our Saviour means not fuch as were called immediately from God himfelf, for they were but few; nor yet fuch as are called by the works of creation and providence, for fo not many only, but all are called; but he means fuch as are called by his word, and by his fervants and ministers reading, preach-

ing, and explaining of it.

And verily that many have been and still are called in this fense, which is the next thing I promised to shew, I need not stand long to prove. For our Saviour having commanded his apostles to go and call all nations to his faith, which is the proper meaning of that place, Matt. xxviii. it cannot be denied but that the apostles prefently dispersed themselves, and preached the gospel to all nations; which they did so effectually, that in a few years after, even in St. Paul's time, The mystery of the gospel was made known to all nations for the obedience of faith, Rom. xvi. 26. and in St. John's time, some were redeemed out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation, Rev. vii. 9. Yea, so mightily grew the word of God and prevailed, that the Ancients compared it to lightning, that immediately dispersed it self, and was seen all the world over. So that in less than two hundred years, Ab ortu solis ad occasum lex christiana suscepta est, The christian religion was received all the world over from East to West, as Lastantius, who then lived, afferts. From which time therefore, how many thousand of millions of fouls have been called to the faith of Christ, by the preaching of his gospel. And not to speak of other nations, how foon did the Son of Righteousness arise upon these western parts of the world, and particularly upon this nation, wherein we dwell? feveral of Christ's own disciples and apostles, as Simon Peter, Simon Zelotes, James the son of Zebedee, Joseph of Arimathea,

thea, Aristobulus, and St. Paul himself, being all recorded by ecclefiaftical writers, to have preached the gospel to this nation. Be sure in less than two hundred years the christian faith was here received, Tertullian himself saying expressly Britannorum inaccessa Romanis loca Christo subdita, The Romans could scarcely come at Britany, but Christ hath conquered it. And foon after him, Arnobius faith that the gospel, Nec ipsos latuit a parte orientis, nec ipjos Britannos a parte occidentis, Was not conceal'd either from the Indians in the eastern part of the world, nor from the Britons themselves in the west. And fince the gospel was first here planted, how many have been called by it to the faith of Christ? Yea, through the mercy of the most high God, how many at this moment are called all the nation over? and to come still closer to our felves, all that read this have I doubt not been often called heretofore, and now called again. For in the name of the most high God, and of his Son Christ, I pray and beseech you all as strangers and pilgrims, to abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, I Pet. ii. 11. to repent of your fins, and believe the gospel. I call and invite you all to accept the offers of grace and pardon which are made you in Jesus Christ, to sit down with him at his own table, and feed by faith upon his body and blood, that so you may partake of the merits of his death and passion, and so live with him for evermore. Thus you are called, but I fear there are but few chosen.

Having thus explained and proved the first part of this proposition, that many are called, we must now consider the meaning, truth and reasons of the other part of it, but few are chosen. Πολλοί οδ είσι κλητοί, ολίγοι ή εκλεκτοί. many are called, but few chosen; that is, there are but few which are so approved of by God, as to be elected and chosen from the other part of the world, to inherit eternal life. That this is the main drift and scope of our blessed Saviour in these words, is plain from the foregoing parable, which gave him occasion to pronounce them. For there all that were first called refused to come to the marriage feast which they were invited to, and of them which came, some had not on their wedding garment; that is, although they came in to the outward profession of the gospel, yet did not walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called, and therefore they likewise are excluded; upon which our Saviour adds these words, For many are called, but few chosen. From whence it is easy to observe his meaning in general to be only this, that although many are called to partake of the privileges and graces of his gospel, yet seeing of those who were called, many would not come at all, and of those who come, many do not come so as the gospel requires of them, with their wedding garment on; hence of the many who are called, there are but few chosen to partake of the marriage feast, that is, of the glorious promises made in the gospel, to those that come aright unto it. Few, not absolutely in themselves consider'd, but few comparatively in respect respect of the many which are not chosen; or rather few in comparison of the many which are called. For if we confider them absolutely in themselves, they are certainly very many; our Saviour himself saith, Many shall come from the East and West, and shall sit down with Abraham, &c. Matth. viii. 11. And in the Revelations, you may read of thousands that were seal'd of every tribe. Yea, There was great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne and before the lamb, clothed with white, and palms in their hands, Rev. vii. 9. Infomuch that for all the numberless number of fallen or apostatized angels, St. Austin was of opinion, that there will be as many men faved, as there are angels damned, or rather more. For, faith he, upon the fall of the angels and men, God determin'd to gather together by his infinite grace, fo many out of the mortal progeny, ut inde suppleat & instauret partem quæ lapsa est angelorum, That he might from thence make up and restore that part of angels which was fallen; ac sic illa dilecta & superna civitas non fraudeter suorum numero civium, quin etiam fortassis & uberiore lætetur. And so that beloved city which is above, may not be deprived of the number of its citizens, but perhaps rejoyce in having more, Aug. de Civ. Dei, 1. 22. c. 1. which notion he grounds upon those words of our Saviour in this chapter, For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are lody sexus, as the angels of God in beaven, Matth. xxii. 30. Or as the words may be inter-

interpreted, they are equal to the angels, and equal in number to the fallen, as well as in quality to the elect angels, as that learned and pious father expounds it. But howfoever that be, this is certain, that the number of men chofen and faved, will be very great, confidered absolutely in themselves; and yet notwithstanding, if they be compared with the many more which are called, they are but very few. Christ's flock is, as himself stiles it, uneer mount a very little, little flock, Luke xii. 32. that is, in comparison of the vast multitudes of souls that flock after the world and fin. As in a garden there are but few choice flowers in comparison of the weeds that grow in it, there are but very few diamonds and precious stones, in comparison of pebbles and gravel upon the fea-shore; in the richest mines there is far more dross than gold and filver: so is it in the church of Christ; there is but little wheat, in comparison of the tares that come up with it; Christ hath a great many hangers on, but few faithful and obedient fervants; there are many that speak him very fair, and make a plaufible profession of the faith and religion which he taught, but where shall we find one that practifeth it? If there be here one, and there another, two or three in a parish, or perhaps in a whole city, what is this to the innumerable company of fuch as are call'd by him, and baptized into his name, and yet leave him to follow after the world and vanity: oh, what just ground had our Saviour to fay, Many are called, but few chosen?

But to demonstrate the truth of this proposition still more fully, and as clearly as possibly I can, I must first lay down one principal as a postulatum, which I suppose all will acknowledge to be true, and that is this, that whatfoever profession a man makes of the christian religion, it will avail him nothing without the practice of it; or if you will take it in our Saviour's own words. Not every one, faith he, that faith unto me, Lord Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but be that doth the will of my Father which is in heaven, Matt. vii. 21. or as the apostle expresseth it, for not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified, Rom. ii. 13. that is, it is not our hearing and knowing our duty that will stand us in any stead before God, but our doing of it; it is not our believing that we may be faved by believing in Christ, whereby we can be faved, without actually believing in him, without fuch a faith whereby we depend upon him, for the pardon and falvation of our immortal fouls, and confequently for the assistance of his grace and Spirit, whereby we may be enabled to obey his gospel, and to perform all fuch things as himself hath told us are necessary in order to our everlasting happiness: and whatfoever faith we pretend to, unless it comes to this that it puts us upon universal obedience to all the commands of God, we may conclude it will do us no good; for it is not fuch a faith as Christ requires, which always works by love, conquers the world, subdues fin, purifies the hearts, and fanctifies the whole foul wherefoever it comes. It is fuch a faith as this which is the

the wedding garment, without which no man is chosen nor admitted to partake of those celestial banquets which Christ our Saviour hath provided And therefore no man can have any ground at all to believe or hope himself to be elected or chosen to eternal falvation, that is not holy in all manner of conversation; God himself having told us expresly, that without boliness no man shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. So that having God's own word for it, we must positively and confidently affert, that no man in the world can upon just grounds be reputed as chofen by God that doth not in all things to the utmost of his power, conform himself, and adjust his actions to the laws and commands of God. So that how many foever are called, how many foever come in to the outward profession of the christian religion, yet none of them can be faid to be chosen, but fuch as are real and true faints. And how few those are, is a matter which we have more cause to bewail than to prove. Howfoever, that we may fee that we have but too much reason to believe this affertion of our bleffed Saviour, that many are called, but few chosen, I defire we may but consider the estate of christendom in general, and weigh the lives and actions of such as profess to believe in Christ, view them well, and examine them by the gospel rules, and then we shall soon conclude that there are but few chosen; or to bring it home more closely to our felves, who are all called, and take out from amongst us all such persons as come not up to the terms of the gospel, and we shall find that there are but few behind, but few indeed

deed who can be discerned and judged by the light either of reason or scripture to be chosen by God to eternal life. For take out from a-

mongst us,

1. All atheistical persons, who though they are baptiz'd into the name of Christ, and so are called to the faith of Christ, yet neither believe in Christ nor God, such fools as say in their heart, there is no God, Pfal. xiv. 1. for all will grant, that they are not chosen by God, who do not fo much as believe that there is any God to chuse them. Neither can it be imagin'd that the allwife God should chuse such fools as these to be with him, who will not fo much as acknowledge him to be. And yet how many fuch fools have we amongst us, whose practices have so deprav'd their principles, that they will not believe there is any God, because they wish there was none? and when these are taken from amongst the called, I fear the number of the chosen amongst them will be much lessened.

2. Take out from amongst us all ignorant perfons, that understand not the common principles of religion, nor the fundamental articles of that faith which they are called to: for that these are not chosen, is plain, in that though they be called by Christ, yet they know not what he would have them to do, nor yet what it is that calls them. And therefore as God would have all men to be saved, so for that end he would have them to come to the knowledge of the truth, I Tim. ii. 4. that is, he would have them know all such truths as himself hath revealed to them in the gospel, as necessary to be known in order

order to their eternal falvation, without which knowledge it is impossible for a man to perform what is requir'd of him; for tho' a man may know his duty and not do it, no man can do his duty unless he first know it. And therefore gross ignorance and faving faith, cannot possibly confift or stand together; for faving faith is always joined with, or puts a man upon fincere obedience to all the commands of God. But how can any man obey the commands of God, who neither knows that God whose commands they are, nor yet what these commands are which God would have him to obey? no certainly, a blind man may as well follow his temporal calling, how intricate foever it be, as he that is grofly ignorant, the high calling of a christian; for he is altogether uncapable of it, and so not only unworthy, but unfit to be chosen to it. Hence God himself hath told us, that he is so far from chufing fuch as live and die in this manner without understanding, that he will never shew them any mercy or favour. For it is a people, faith he, of no understanding, therefore he that made them will not have mercy on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour, Ifa. xxvii. II. neither doth he ever blame mankind for any thing in the world more than for not knowing, and therefore not confidering him that made and feeds them, Isa. i. 2, 3. Host vi. 1. and that we may be still farther affured that he chuseth no such persons to dwell with him, as do not know him and his commands, he hath given it under his. hand, that he rejects them, faying, My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge: because thous balt

hast rejected knowledge, I will also reject thee, that thou shalt be no priest to me; seeing thou hast forgotten the law of thy God, I will also forget

thy children, Hos. iv. 6.

That therefore no persons that are grosly ignorant, and live and die in that condition, are chosen to eternal falvation, I suppose, the premifes confider'd, all will acknowledge. But alas! how many fuch persons are there in the world, how many amongst our selves? how many who are very cunning and expert in the management of any worldly business, but are more novices or rather ideots in matters of true religion? or as the prophet words it, who are wife to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge, Jer. iv. 22. how many fuch ignorant and fottish people are there in every corner of the land? and in this city it felf! where they do, or may hear the word of God read and expounded to them every day, and yet ask them feriously of the grounds of the christian religion, and the reason of the hope that is in them, and they are no more able to give a fatisfactory or rational anfwer, than if they had never heard of any fuch book as the bible in the world, or had been born and bred in the remotest corners of America, where the found of the gospel never yet came. But all fuch, how many foever they be, though they be called, they must stand aloof off, for so long as they are fuch we may be confident they are not chosen. Insomuch that should we take away no other from the number of the called, but only fuch as know not what they are called to, it would appear but too clearly to be true, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen.

3. Take out from amongst us all vicious, profane, debauched and impenitent persons, all that make a mock of fin, and that jeer at holiness, that live as without God in the world, as if they had neither God to serve, nor souls to save; as if there was neither a hell to avoid nor a heaven to enjoy, and therefore make it their business to gratify their flesh, and to indulge their appetite with carnal and fenfual pleasures, looking no higher than to be fellow-sharers with the brutes that perish; such, as in their bewitching cups, flick not to fly in the face of heaven it felf, and dare challenge God himself to damn them; that make lying their usual dialect, and swearing their pleafing rhetorick; and are so far from being troubled for these their fins, that they take pleafure and delight in them, fo far from being ashamed of them, that they make them their pride and glory, and fo make it their pleafure to displease God, and their highest honour to dishonour him that is honour and perfection it felf. For that no fuch persons as these who live and die in fuch notorious crimes upon earth, are chosen to live with God in heaven, none can deny, that believes the scripture to be true, which in plain terms affure us of the contrary. Know ye not, faith the apostle, that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, Mall shall inherit the kingdom of God, I Cor. vi. 9, 10. and St. John tells us, that only they who do the commandments enter into the city of heaven: but without are dogs, and forcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whofoever loveth and maketh a lie, Rev. xxii. 14, 15. fo that all fuch persons, without timely repentance, are most certainly excluded from the number of the chosen. And how many are there amongst us, who allow themselves in some such fin or other? or rather, where shall we find a man that doth not? but to all persons that continue in fuch fins, I may fay, stand you by, you have no ground, as yet, to think that you are chofen, but have rather all the reason in the world to believe, that if you go on in such a finful course, you will never know what heaven or happiness is. But when all fuch are taken out of the number of the called, what a pitious scouting will be left behind! in plain terms, we have just cause to fear, that ignorant and diffolute persons make the greatest part of those who are called christians.

4. Take out from amongst us, all hypocritical and false hearted persons, that seem indeed to be honest and good men, but still retain some secret sin or other which will as certainly keep them out of heaven, as the most notorious, or scandalous crime that is: such as our Saviour compares to whited sepulchres, which outwardly appear very beautiful, but are within full of dead mens bones, and of all uncleanness, Matt. xxiii. 27. such whose outward conversation is altogether unblameable; so that no man can charge them with thest, perjury, drunkenness, uncleanness,

and the like; but in the mean while, they are malicious, uncharitable, censorious, proud, selfconceited, disobedient to parents or magistrates. covetous, ambitious, and the like. though they be free from those fins which others are guilty of, yet they are guilty of as bad fins, which the others may be freed from. which also may be added all such as make indeed a great shew of piety, and seem mighty\_ zealous for the little circumstances of religion, but neglect the weighty matters of the law, the love of God, mercy, justice, and the like. But for all the vain hopes and high conceits that fuch persons may have of themselves, they are far from being such as the gospel requires them, and by consequence from the number of the chosen here spoken of. For the Pharisees were fuch persons as these, and yet our Saviour himfelf tells us, That except our righteousness exceeds the righteougness of the Scribes and Pharifees, we shall in no wife enter into the kingdom of God, Matth. vi. 20. And when he tells us elsewhere, That except we repent we must all likewise perish, Luke xiii. 3. his meaning is, not that we must repent of some, or many, or most, but of all our fins, and so repent of them, as to turn from them; and fo turn from all fin, as for the future to be holy in all manner of conversation, otherwise our Saviour himself assures us, that he will never fave us, but we must perish without remedy.

Let any man consider this, and then tell me what he thinks of the number of the chosen, whether it be not very small indeed, in comparison

rison of the many which are called. For not to speak of other parts of Christendom, all the people of this nation are called to the faith of Christ; and how many they are, I cannot say, we all know, for it is past any man's knowledge. But where is the man amongst us all, that doth not harbour some secret lust or other in his bofom; yea, of the many men in this nation, where is he that can fay with David, I have kept my felf from mine iniquity? Or to use the words of the prophet, Run ye to and fro through the streets of this city, and see now and know, and seek if ye can find a man, if there be any that executeth judgment, that seeketh the truth, that ferveth the Lord with a perfect heart and a willing mind. I do not deny but there are a great many professors of religion amongst us, who would fain be accounted more strict and holy than their neighbours, fo as to be reckon'd the religious; as the friers and nuns are in the church of Rome: but are they therefore to be esteemed the elect and chosen of God, because they fancy themselves to be so? or rather is not their pride and felf-conceitedness an argument, that they are not so? blessed be God for it, I have no spleen nor rancour against any of them, but heartily wish they were as truly good and holy as they would feem to be. But what? is not pride a fin? is not felf-conceitedness a fin? is not irreverence in God's worship a sin? is not disobedience to magistrates a sin? is not uncharitableness or censoriousness a sin? certainly all these will be found to be fins another day. And therefore whatfoever pretences men make unto religion,

religion, if they allow themselves in such sins as these, they are as far from being in the number of the chosen, as the most dissolute and scandalous persons in the world. But when these too are remov'd from the number of the called, how sew of them will appear to be chosen?

5. Yet once again. Take out all fuch as believe not in our Lord Jesus Christ, but being morally honest and faithful in performing their duty to God and man, trust more in their own good works, than to his merit and mediation. For that all fuch are to be excluded is plain, from the whole tenour of the gospel, which assures us, that there is no falvation to be had but only by Jesus Christ; nor by him neither, but only by believing in him. But if Christ should come this day to judgment, would he find faith upon earth? verily, I fear he would find but very little, if any at all amongst us: He might, I believe, find some pretty strict and circumspect in obeying of his other laws, or, at least, endeavouring to do fo. But for a man to do all that is required of him, and yet to count himself an unprofitable fervant; for a man to do all he can, and yet rest upon nothing that he hath done, but to depend wholly upon another, even upon Jefus Christ, for life and happiness, this is hard indeed to flesh and blood, and as rare to find, as it is to find a rose amongst the weeds and thiftles of a barren wilderness, or a diamond amongst the gravel upon the sea-shoar; here and there, I believe, there may be found one, but fo rarely, that they can scarce be termed any, be fure but very few, in comparison of the many which are called. Now

Now let us put these things together, and we shall easily grant that this saying of our Saviour was but too true, that many are called, but And to bring it closer to our few chosen. felves, we are all called to repent and believe the gospel: now take out from amongst us all ignorant persons, that have heard indeed, but understand not what they hear; all atheistical perfons that believe not really that there is a God to judge them; all debauched finners that live in open and notorious crimes; all pharifaical hypocrites that avoid open, but indulge themfelves in fecret fins, that have the form, but not the power of godliness; and all fuch who are as St. Paul was before his conversion, as touching the righteousness of the law blameless, but yet believe not in Jesus Christ. Take out, I say, all fuch persons as I have named, from amongst us, and what a fmall number, proportionably, should we have left behind? how many would be excluded the presence of God, how sew would continue in it! what cause should we then have to fay with our Saviour, that many are called, but few chosen!

Having thus explain'd the meaning, and confirmed the truth of this proposition, that many are called but few chosen, we must consider the reasons of it, how it comes to pass, that of the many which are called, there are but few chosen? a thing which I confess we have all just cause to wonder and admire at; are not men all rational creatures? are they not able to distinguish betwixt good and evil? do not they understand their own interest: what then should be

the reason that so many of them should be called and invited to the chiefest good, the highest happiness their natures are capable of, yet so few of them should mind or prosecute it, so as to be chosen or admitted into the participation of it; what shall we ascribe it to, the will and pleasure of Almighty God, as if he delighted in the ruin of his creatures, and therefore, altho' he calls them, he would not have them come unto him? no, that cannot be; for in his revealed will, which is the only rule that we are to walk by, he hath told us the contrary in plain terms, and hath confirmed it too with an oath; faying, As I live, faith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that he should turn from his ways and live, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. And elsewhere he affures us, that he would have all men to be faved, and to come to the knowledge of the truth, I Tim. ii. 4. And therefore, if we believe what God faith, nay, if we believe what he hath fworn, we must needs acknowledge that it is his will and pleafure, that as many as are called, should be all chosen, and And indeed, if he had no mind we should come when we are called to him, why should he call us all to come? why hath he given us his word, his ministers, his ordinances, and all to invite and oblige us to repent and turn to him, if after all he was refolv'd not to accept of us, nor would have us come at all? Far be it from us, that we should have such hard and unworthy thoughts of the great Creator and Governour of the world; especially confidering that he hath told us the contrary, as plainly plainly as it was possible for him to express his mind unto us. I do not deny, but that according to the apostle, Known unto God are all his works, from the beginning of the world, Acts xv. And that there are several passages in scripture, which intimate unto us God's eternal election of all that are truly pious, to live with him for ever. But it is not for us to be so bold and impudent, as to pry into the secrets of God, nor fo curious, as to fearch into his eternal and incomprehenfible decrees; but we must still remember the words of Moses, That secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but these things which are revealed belong unto us, that we may do all the words of his law, Deut. xxix. 29. Whatfoever is necessary for us to believe or do, in order to our eternal falvation, is clearly revealed to us in the holy scriptures, and therefore what we there read, belongs unto us to know; neither are we to look any farther than to his revealed will. But God, in the scriptures, doth plainly tell us, not only in the places before quoted, but elsewhere, that he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance, 2 Pet. iii. 9. This is the revealed will of God, which we are to acquiesce in, and rest fully satisfied with, so as to act accordingly, without concerning our felves about things that are too high for us, and no way belong unto us. And therefore it is not in his fecret, but revealed will, that we are to fearch for the reasons of this proposition, that many are called, but few chosen.

Now in consulting the word of God, to find out the reasons of this so strange affertion, that many are called, but sew chosen, I know no better or fitter place to search for them, than this parable, which gave our blessed Saviour the occasion of afferting it; in which it is very observable, that he meddles not at all with any reasons a priori, deduc'd from the eternal decrees of his Father, but he only suggests to us the reasons a posteriori, drawn from the disposition and carriage of men, why so many of them are called,

and yet so few chosen.

For the opening whereof we must know, that the end and intent of this parable, was only to shew the entertainment which his gospel had then, and should still meet with in the world: many refusing to embrace it at all, and of those who embrace it, many still walking unworthy So that the issue and consequence of it will be, that though many are called to it, there are but few chosen. And he hath so worded the parable, that we need not feek any farther for the reasons of this his conclusion from it, they being almost clearly couched in the parable it felf; which that we may the better understand, I shall open and explain them particularly, so as to make them intelligible, I hope, to the meanest capacity.

The first reason therefore why so many are called, but sew chosen, is, because they who are called to Christ, will not come unto him; for this is the first reason which our Saviour himself, in the parable, assigns for it; The King, saith he, sent his servants to call them that were

bidden

bidden to the marriage, and they would not come, Mat. xxiii. 3. and they would not come; fo that the great fault is still in the wills of men, which are generally fo deprav'd and corrupt, that tho' they be called never fo oft, and cannot but in reason acknowledge that it is their interest to come, yet they have so strange an averseness to the holiness and purity of the gospel which they are called to, they will not come unto it, only because they will not; for here, they who were first bidden, give no reason of their refusal, only it is faid, they would not come. And good cause why, for when we have searched into all the reasons imaginable, why men do not fully fubmit themselves to the obedience of the gospel, they will all resolve and empty themselves into this, that they will not, because they will not. Let ministers say what they can, let the scripture fay what it will, let God himself say what he pleases, yet finners men are, and finners they will be, in spite of them all; as the prophet rebuking the people for their fins, faid, But thou saidst, there is no hope; no, for I have loved strangers, and after them will I go, Jer. ii. 25. And so it is to this day: we tell them of their sins, and the dangerous consequences of them; we tell them that they must not love the world, but feek the kingdom of God and his righteousness. in the first place; we tell them from Christ's own mouth, that except they repent and forfake their fins, they must perish; but they say in effect, that we had as good hold our tongues; for they have loved the world, and after it will go, they have found pleasure in the commission of their Q 4

their fins, and therefore they will commit them; Christ calls them to come to him, and they know no reason why they should not, but howsoever, they will not come. If we were but once willing, the work was done: for what our wills are really inclined to, we cannot but use the utmost of our endeavour to attain. But the mischief is, men read the gospel, they hear Christ calling upon. them to believe and obey it, but their wills are still averse from it; there is a kind of antipathy and contrariety within them, against such exact and real holiness as the gospel requires from them. So that if they perish, they must blame themselves for it, it is their own choice, they chuse and prefer their fins, with all the miseries which attend them, before the gospel of Christ, with all the glory and happiness which is offer'd in it; and therefore, as God faid to his people, Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die, O house of Israel? Ezek. xxxiii. 11. fo fay I to these men, repent and believe the gospel, for why will ye die, why will ye perish eternally? have you any reason for it? none in the world but your own wills. Christ hath told you in plain terms, Him that cometh to me, I will in no wife cast out, John vi. 35. But if you will not come unto him, who can help that? are not yourselves only in the fault? will not your blood be upon your own heads? what could Christ have done more for you than he hath done? what could he have fuffered more for you than he hath fuffered? how could he call ye to him more plainly or pathetically than he doth? but after all this, you will not come unto him, you must even thank your

your selves for all the torments you must e'er long suffer and undergo. And this is, indeed, the case of the greatest part of mankind, that tho' they be called and invited to partake of all the merits of Christ's death and passion, yet they will not come unto him. And this is the first and great reason why so many are called,

and yet so few chosen, John v. 40.

2. The fecond reason is, because men do not really believe that they are invited to fuch glorious things as indeed they are, as our Saviour intimates in the parable. For when they who were bidden, would not come upon the first invitation, as not believing the message which those servants brought them, the king sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready, come unto the marriage, Mat. xxii. 24. When the first servants were not believ'd, he fent others with fuller instructions, giving them orders to acquaint the guests, that all things were now ready, and to assure them that it was to a marriage-feast they were invited. But it feems, whatfoever the first or fecond fervants could fay, it was to no purpose, they would not believe them, and therefore fent them away as they came; whereby our Saviour exactly discovers to us the entertainment that his gospel always did, and still would meet with in the world. Before his own coming into the world, he fent his prophets to invite mankind to accept of the terms propounded in it, and to call upon them to repent and turn to God, that their fins might be blotted out, and their fouls admitted

admitted into the grace and favour of Almighty God, and so partake of eternal glory, which the prophets called men to, under the notion of a feast, a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees, will refined, Isa. xxv. 6. which they called all men to, faying, Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, Isa. lv. 1. how their message was receiv'd, the same prophet declares, faying, Who kath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed, Ifa. Ivii. 1. and fo it is fince. For when the prophets could not be credited, God afterwards fent his apostles, and still to this day is sending servant after servant to invite men to grace and pardon, to heaven and eternal happiness. But we his ministers may still say with the prophet, Who hath believed our report? we tell men that unless they repent and turn to God, iniquity will be their ruin; we tell them also, that if they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they shall be faved; and if they be holy here, they shall be happy hereafter. But what fignifies our telling them of these things, if they believe not what we fay? and yet who doth? men give us the hearing, cenfure what they have heard, and that is all the use they make of it, never really or firmly believing any one truth that we make known or expound unto them; and this being the case not only of some few, but of the greatest part of mankind, hence it comes to pass that fo many are called and fo few are chosen, even because they who are called do not believe it, and fo it is all one with them, whether they be called called or no. Be fure God chuseth none but such as believe the word he sends unto them; for as the apostle saith, God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in saith, Jam. ii. 5. If they be not rich in saith, they are not for his purpose, and seeing there are but sew that are so; hence of the many which are called, there are

but few chosen.

3. Another reason why, of the many which are call'd there are so few chosen, is because they have no real esteem or value for the things they are call'd to; as it is in the parable, when the fervants were fent to call upon them to make hafte to the feast, because all things were ready, it is faid that they made light of it, ver. 5. they did not think it worth their while to go, tho' it was to a feast, to a marriage feast, yea, to the marriage feast of so great a person as aking's son; no, not though they were invited by the king himfelf unto it. Thus it was in ancient times, and thus it is still; the King of heaven fend to invite men to his court, to lay afide their filthy garments, and to put on the robes that he hath prepared for them, that they may be holy as he is holy, and so live with him, and be happy for ever. But they make light of fuch things as these, they can see no such beauty in Christ, why they should defire him, no such excellency in God himself, why they should be in love with him; and as for heaven, they never were there yet, and therefore care not whether they ever come there or no; though they be called, they matter not whether they be chosen to it or no; and hence likewise it is, that of the many which are called, there are so few chosen.

4. Another reason is, because they who are called, are generally addicted to the things of this life, they have the ferpent's curse upon them, to feed upon the dust of the earth, and therefore flight all the overtures that are made them of heaven and eternal happiness. As our Saviour himself intimates in this parable, faying, that when they were invited they made light of it, and went their way, one to his farm, another to his merchandise, ver. 5. Thus we read of the Pharisees, that they being covetous, when they heard the words of Christ, they derided him, Luke xvi. 14. And thus it is to this day; though men be called to Christ, they are so much taken up with worldly bufiness, that they can find no time to come unto him; but away they go again, one to his trade, another to his merchandise. These are the things that most mens minds are wholly bent upon, and therefore they will not be perfuaded to leave them to go to Christ. It is true, if he called them to great estates, if he called them to a good bargain, if he called them to crowns and scepters in this world, then they would all strive which should be chosen first. But the things that he calls us to, are quite of another nature; he calls us to repent of our fins, to believe in him, to contemn the world, to have our conversations in But these are things which men do not love to hear of, as being contrary to their earthly temper and inclinations; and therefore we who are God's ministers may call our hearts out, before they will fet themselves in good earnest to mind them. Or to bring it home still closer to us, how often have we been invited to that spiritual feast, the sacrament of the Lord's fupper, but how few are there that come unto it, when the whole congregation is called to partake of it? scarce one in twenty think it worth their while to stay, to have their share in What can be the reason of this, but that our minds are taken up with other things, which we fancy to be of far greater concernment to us, than all the merits of Christ's death and passion. And therefore it is no wonder that so many of us are called, and so few chosen, seeing we our felves chuse the toys and trifles of this transient world, before all those real joys which in the gospel we are called and invited to.

4. In the next place, many of them which are called, have so strange an antipathy to God and goodness, that they do not only neglect and flight their heavenly, in comparison of their earthly calling, but they hate and abuse such as are fent to call them, as our Saviour himself intimates, ver. 6. O barbarous cruelty! what hurt, what injury is done unto them? they are invited to a feast, and for this they are angry, and kill the messengers which are sent to invite them. Thus it hath been in all ages. This was the entertainment, this the requital that most of the prophets received for the divine message they brought to mankind, Matth. xxiii. 37. Christ himself, the Son and heir of God, was put to death for inviting men to life and happiness, and so were his apostles too: and so it is to this day. There is still a fecret malice and hatred in mens hearts against fuch as fincerely endeavour to preach the gospel clearly and fully to them. We tell them of their fins, we acquaint them with the danger they are in, we call upon them to forfake and avoid them, we invite them to Christ, and so to heaven and eternal happiness; and for this, many of them are angry with us, and incenfed against us. may forgive us this wrong, I can affure them we intend them no evil, but all the good we do, or can defire to our own fouls; and whatfoever the fuccess be, it is still our duty to call upon them, to advise them of their duty, and, possible, reclaim them from their fins; and if they be angry with us for that, as many are, they cannot wonder at our Saviour's faying, that

many are called but few chosen.

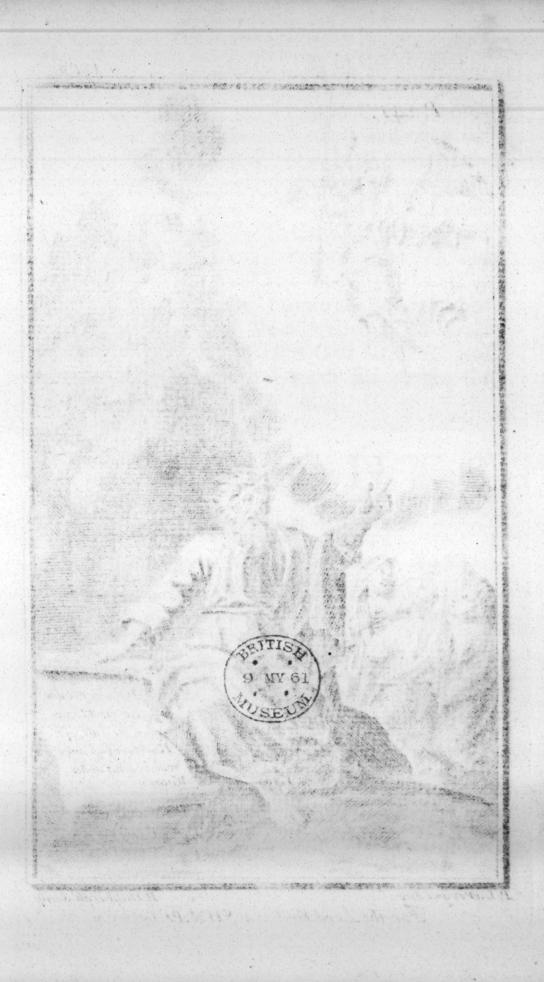
6. The last reason which our Saviour gives in this parable, why many are called, but few chofen, is because of those who are called, and come too at their call, many come not aright, which he fignifies by the man that came without his wedding garment, ver. 11, 12, 13. where, although he mentions but one man, yet under that one, is comprehended all of the same kind, even all fuch persons as have the gospel preached to them, and fo are called and invited to all graces and privileges proposed in it, all such as profess to believe in Christ, and to expect happiness and salvation from him, yet will not come up to the terms which he propounds in his gospel to them, even to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they are called, Eph. iv. 1. And indeed

deed this is the great reason of all, why, of so many which are called, there are so few chosen, because there are so few which do all things which the gospel requires of them. Many, like Herod, will do many things, Mark vi. 20. and are almost persuaded to be Christians, as Agrippa was, Acts xxvi. 28. How zealous are some for, how violent are others against, the little ceremonies and circumstances of religion, and in the mean while neglect and let flip the power and substance of it? how demure are some in their carriage towards men, but irreverently and flovenly in the worship of Almighty God? how devout will others feem towards God, but are still careless and negligent of their duty towards men? Some are all for the duties of the first table without the second, others for the fecond without the first. Some are altogether for obedience and good works, without faith in Christ; others are as much for faith in Christ, without obedience and good works. Some would do all themselves, as if Christ had done nothing for them, others fancy that Christ hath so done all things for them, that there is nothing left for themselves to do: and so betwixt both these forts of people, which are the far greater part of those who are called, either the merits, or else the laws of Christ, are slighted and contemned. But is this the way to be faved? No, furely: if I know any thing of the gospel, it requires both repentance and faith in Christ, that we perform fincere obedience to all his laws, and yet trust in him, and him alone, for pardon, acceptance, and falvation. And whofoever comes short

short of this, though he be called, we may be sure he is not chosen; though he come to the marriage feast with those that are invited, yet wanting his wedding garment, he will be cast out again with shame and confusion of face. So that it is not our doing some, or many, or most of the things which the gospel requires, that will do our business, unless we do all to the utmost of our skill and power. But where shall we find the man that doth so? what ground have we to acknowledge that our Saviour had but too much cause to say, Many are called, but sew chosen; which I fear is but too true, not

only of others, but our selves too.

I fay not this to discourage any one; no, it is my hearty defire and prayer to the eternal God, that every foul of us might be chosen and saved. But my great fear is, that many think it so easy a matter to go to heaven, that if they do but fay their prayers, and hear fermons now and then, they cannot miss of it, and therefore need not trouble themselves any farther about it. But they must give me leave to tell them, that this will not ferve their turn; if it would, most of those which are called would be chosen too. Whereas our Saviour himself tells us, in plain terms, the contrary. And yet this should be so far from discouraging of us, that it should rather excite us to greater diligence about it than heretofore we may have used, as our Saviour himfelf intimates in his answer to this question. Luke xiii. 23, 24. And verily, what greater encouragement can we have than to consider, that tho' there be but few chosen, yet there are some? for





P. Lavergne Ins:

For the Lord God is a SUN.P.J. LXXXIV.u.

For why may not you and I be in the number of those few as well as others? Are not we all call'd to Christ? are not we all invited, yea, commanded to believe in his name, and obey his gospel, that so we may partake of everlasting glory? let us then all fet upon that work in good earnest, which we are called too. Let us but fear God, and keep his commandments, and believe in his Son for his acceptance of us, and then we need not fear, but though of the many others which are called, there are but few chofen, yet we few who are all called, shall be all chosen; chosen to live with God himself, and Jesus Christ, and to sing forth his praises for evermore.

## THOUGHTS

UPON

The Appearance of Christ the Sun of Righteoufness, or the Beatifick Vifion.

O long as we are in the body, we are apt to be governed wholly by its fenses, seldom or never minding any thing but what comes to us through

one or other of them. Though we are all able to abstract our thoughts when we please from matter, and fix them upon things that are purely spiritual; there are but few that ever do it. But few, even among those also that have such things revealed to them by God himself, and so have infinitely R

infinitely more and firmer ground to believe them, than any one, or all their senses put together can afford. Such are the great truths of the gospel, for which we have the infallible word and testimony of the Supreme Truth; yet seeing they are not the objects of sense, but only of our faith, though we profess to believe them, yet we take but little notice of them and are usually no more affected with them, than as if there were no fuch things in being. Hence it hath pleased God, in great compassion to our infirmity, not only to reveal and make known fuch spiritual things to us, in plain and easy terms, but likewise to bring them as near as possible to our fenses, by representing them to us under the names and characters of such sensible objects as bear the greatest resemblance to them; that we who are led fo much by our fenfes, may by them also be directed how to apprehend those spiritual objects which he hath told us of, on purpose that we may believe them upon his word.

Thus he often useth the words, hand, eye, and the like, to signify his own divine perfections to us. And thus it was that our Saviour preached the gospel to the people, by parables, and similitudes, of things commonly seen and done among themselves. The prophets also frequently took the same course, as might be shewn by many instances; but one of the most remarkable is that in Mal. iv. 2, where the prophet, in the name of God, speaking of Christ's coming into the world, expressent it by the rising of the sun, saying, To you that fear my name shall the sun

sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his

wings.

For that Jesus Christ is that sun of righteousness here spoken of, is so plain from the context, and whole defign of the prophet, that I need not infift upon the proving it; but shall only observe, that this being the last of all the prophets in the Old Testament, he shuts up his own, and all the other prophecies, with a clear prediction of Christ, and his fore-runner John the Baptist, whom he calls Elijah or Elias, and concludes his prophecy with these words concerning him, Behold I will send you Elijab the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to the fathers, lest I come and smite the earth (or rather the land) with a curse, Mal. iv. 5, 6. For that by Elijah is here meant John the Baptist, we are affured by Christ himself, Mat. xi. 14. And it is very observable, that as this prophet ends the Old Testament with a prediction of Elias, so St. Luke begins the New with a relation how John the Baptist was born, and so came into the world a little before Christ, as the morning-star that appeared before the rifing of the fun of righteoufnefs.

But of the day which shall come at the rising of that glorious sun, the prophet saith, that it shall burn as an oven, and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch, ver. 1. It will be a terrible

day to those that shall obstinately refuse to walk in the light of it, they shall be all consumed, as we read the unbelieving Jews were at the destruction of Jerusalem, that happened soon after that sun was up. But then turning himself, as it were, to his own people, Almighty God here, by his prophet, chears and comforts them, saying to them, But unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings, &c. He shall arise to all, but to the other, with such a scorching heat as shall burn them up, to these with healing in his wings, or rays, so as not to hurt, but heal them of all their maladies.

Now that which I chiefly defign by God's affistance, to shew from these words, is, what thoughts they suggest to us concerning our blessed Saviour, by calling him the fun of righteoufness. But to make the way as plain as I can, we must first confider, to whom he is here faid to arife with bealing in his wings, even to those that fear the name of God, i.e. to those who firmly believing in God, and being fully perfuaded of his infinite power, justice and mercy, and also of the truth of all his threats and promifes, stand continually in awe of him, not daring to do any thing willingly that may offend him, nor leave any thing undone that he would have them do. Such, and fuch only, can be truly faid to fear God. And therefore the fear of God, in the feriptures, especially of the Old Testament, is all along put for the whole duty of man. There being no duty that a man owes, either to God or his neighbour, but if he really fears God, he will

will endeavour all he can to do it. But this neceffarily supposeth his belief in God, and his holy word, or rather proceeds originally from For he that cometh unto God, so as to fear and obey him, must believe that he is, and that be is a rewarder of them who diligently feek him, Heb. xi. 6. So that as no man can believe in God, but he must needs fear him, so no man can fear God, unless he first believes in him. From whence it necessarily follows, that by those who are here faid to fear the name of God, we can understand no other but only such as are possessed with a firm belief in him, and with a full perfuafion of the truth and certainty of those divine revelations that he hath made of himfelf, and of his will to mankind, and therefore live

of these, and these only, it is here said, that to them shall the sun of righteousness arise with

to them shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings. Not to any other; no

other being able to see his light, nor capable of those healing influences that proceed from him. For though he be a sun, he is not such a sun as we see with our bodily eyes in the sirmament, but the sun of righteousness, shining in the highest heavens, beyond the reach of our senses, visible only to the eye of faith, the evidence of things not seen. Insomuch that although he be risen, and darts down his beams to this lower world continually, yet they who have not faith can neither see him, nor enjoy any more benefit by him, than as if he was not risen, or did not

thine at all. As if a man be born stark blind, though the sun shines never so clear about him,

he fees no more than he did before, but lives in the dark at noon-day as much as at mid-night; neither can ye ever make him understand what light or colours are; for having not that fense, by which alone fuch things can be perceived, he can never understand what you mean by such things, so as to form any true notion of them in his mind. So it is in our present case; though the fun of righteousness be risen, and shines most gloriously in the world, yet being the object only of our faith, without that a man can discern nothing of him. He may, perhaps, talk of him as a blind man may talk of light; but all the while he knows not what he means by the words which he useth about him. For he useth them only as words in course, taken up from those he talks with, without having any effect or operation at all upon his mind; whereas they who really believe God's word, and what is there revealed concerning the fun of righteoufness; they fee his light, they feel his heat, they experience the power and efficacy of his influences; and therefore, although they who have not faith (as few have) can be no way profited by what they shall hear or read of him, yet they who have, and act it upon what they hear or read out of God's holy word concerning him, they will find their thoughts and apprehensions of him cleared up, and their affections enflamed to him, fo as to love and honour him for the future, as the fountain of all that spiritual life, and light, and joy they have. For to them he will arise with healing in his wings.

He did not only arise once, but he continually ariseth to those who believe in God, and fear him. For thus faith the Lord, To you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise, with healing in his wings. It is true, he speaks more especially of his incarnation, or visible appearance in the world; but by this manner of speaking, he intimates withal, that this sun of righteousness is always shining upon his faithful people, more or less, in all ages from the beginning to the end of the world. For in that it is faid be shall arise, it is plainly supposed that he was the fun of righteousness before, and gave light unto the world, though not fo clearly as when he was actually rifen. And we fee and enjoy the light of the fun, long before he rifeth, from the first dawning of the day, though it grows clearer and clearer, all along as he comes. nearer and nearer to his rifing; fo the fun of righteousness began to enlighten the world as foon as it was darkned by fin; the day then began to break, and it grew lighter and lighter in every age. Adam himself saw something of this light, Abraham more; Abraham rejoiced to fee my day, faith this glorious fun, be faw it, and was glad, John viii. 56. David and the prophets after him, faw it most clearly, especially this, the last of the prophets: he saw this sun in a manner rifing, so that he could tell the people it would fuddenly get above their horizon, The Lord whom ye feek, faith he, shall suddenly come to bis temple, Mal. iii. 1. and acquaints them also with the happy influences it would. have upon them, faying in the name of God, Unto. Unto you that fear my name shall the fun of righ-

teou/ness arise with healing in his wings.

The fun of righteousness, that is, as I observed before, Jesus Christ the righteous, who is often foretold or spoke of under the name and notion of the fun or star that giveth light unto the world. There shall come a star out of Jacob, faid Balaam, Num. xxiv. 17. And he shall be as the light of the morning when the sun riseth, faith David, 2 Sam. xxiii. 4. And the prophet Isaiah speaking of his coming, faith, The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them bath the light shined, Ifa. ix. 2. For that this was spoken of Christ, we have the authority of the evangelist, Mat. iv. 16. To the same purpose is that of the same prophet, Arise, skine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is rifen upon thee. For behold the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people, but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be feen upon thee, Ifa. lx. 1, 2. The fun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee. But the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thyglory, ver. 19, 20. To which we may add the many places where Christ is called now which we tranflate the branch. As, I will bring forth my fervant the branch, Zech. iii. 8. Behold the man, whose name is the branch, vi. 8. I will raise up to David, a righteous branch, Jer. xxiii. 25. And a-branch of righteou/ne/s, xxxiii. 15. In all which places, the original word fignifies also the rifing of the fun, and is accordingly render'd by the LXX

LXX 'Avatoni, Oriens, not that part of heaven where the fun rifeth, but the fun it felf as rifing there. And fo it is translated also both in the Syriack and Arabick versions. And where it is said, in that day shall the branch of the Lord be beautiful, Ifa. v. 2. In the LXX it is comadules & Oeds, God shall shine forth. In the Syriack, The rifing of the Lord shall be for glory. In Arabick, The Lord shall rise as the sun. And that this is the true sense of the word in all these places, appears from the prophecy of Zacharias the father of John the Baptist; for speaking of Christ's coming, he expresseth it, according to our translation, by faying, The day-spring from on high hath visited us, Luke i. 78. But in the original it is the same word that the LXX use in all the aforesaid places, 'A aroan, Oriens, the rifing fun. And it is much to be observ'd, that all the said places of the prophets, are interpreted of the Messiah or Christ; by the Targum or Chaldee paraphrase, made by the ancient Jews themselves; for nor the rifing fun, is there translated awit the Christ, as if it was only another name for Messiah, the Saviour of the world. From all which it appears, that when the prophet here calls our Saviour Christ the fun of righteousness, he speaks according to the common sense and practice of the church at the time.

And verily he may well be called the fun, both in respect of what he is in himself, and in respect of what he is to us. As there is but one sun in the sirmament, it is the chief of all creatures that we see in the world. There is nothing upon earth, but what is vastly inferior, the very

stars of heaven seem no way comparable to it; it is the top, the head, the glory of all visible objects: in like manner, as there is but one Saviour in the world, he is exalted far above all things in it, not only above the fun it felf, but above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come. All things are put under his feet, and he is given to be head over all things to the church, Eph. i. 21, 22. The very angels, authorities and powers of heaven, are all made subject to bim, 1 Pet. iii. 22. And that is the reason that he is faid to be at the right hand of God, because he is preferred before, and fet over the whole creation, next to the almighty Creator himself, where he now reigns, and doth whatfoever he pleaseth in heaven and earth.

And as the fun is in it felf also the most glorious, as well as the most excellent creature we fee, of fuch transcendent beauty, splendor and glory, that we cannot look stedfastly upon it, but our eyes are presently dazled; so is Christ, the fun of righteousness: when he was transfigured, bis face did shine as the sun, Mat. xvii. 2. When St. John had a glimpse of him, he faw his countenance as the sun that Shineth in his strength, Rev. i. 16. When he appeared to St. Paul going to Damascus at mid-day, there was a light above the brightness of the sun, shining round about him, and them that journied with him, Acts xxvi. 13. And it is no wonder, For he is the brightness of the father's glory, and the express image of his person, Heb. i. 3. and therefore must must needs shine more gloriously than it is possible for any mere creature to do; his very body, by reason of its union to the divine person, is a glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. The most glorious, doubtless, of all the bodies in the world, as far exceeding the fun, as that doth a clod of earth; infomuch, that could we look upon our Lord as he now shines forth in all his glory in the highest heavens, how would our eyes be dazled? our whole fouls amazed and confounded at his excellent glory? the fun would appear to us no otherwise than as the moon and stars do, when And he that so far excels the the fun is up. fun in that very property, wherein the fun excels all other things, may well be called the fun. The fun, by way of pre-eminence, the most glorious fun in the world, in the comparison whereof nothing elfe deferves to be call'd by that name. Neither may our bleffed Saviour be justly called by this glorious name only for what he is in himfelf, but likewise from what he doth for us; as may be easily demonstrated from all the benefits that we receive from the fun. I shall instance in fome of the most plain and obvious.

First therefore, the sun we know is the sountain of all the light that we have upon earth, without which we could see nothing, not so much as the way that is before us, but should be always groping and stumbling in the dark; whereas, by it, we can discern every thing that is about us, or at any distance from us, as far as our fight can reach. In which respect our blessed Lord is the Sun indeed; the light of the world, John viii, 13. The true light that lighteneth every one that

that cometh into the world, ch. i. 9. A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel, 1 Pet. ii. 9. Whereby we can see things that are not visible to the eye, as plainly as we do those that are. For this day-spring from on bigb, this fun of righteoufness hath visited us, to give light to them that fit in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet in the way of peace, Luke i. 78, 79. To shew us the invisible things of God, and to direct us to all things belonging to our everlasting peace and happiness. He hath made them all clear and manifest to us in his gospel. But what soever maketh manifest is light, Eph. v. 13. Wherefore he is faid to have brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, 2 Tim. i. 10. Because he hath there so clearly revealed them to us, that by the light of his holy gospel, we may see all things necessary to be known, believ'd, or done, in order to eternal life, as plainly as we can fee the most visible objects at noon-day.

By this light we can see as much of the glory of God himself, as our mortal nature can bear. For no man bath seen God at any time, the only begotten Son which is in the bosom of the Father, he bath declared him, John i. 18. neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and be to whomsoever the Son will reveal him, Matth. xi. 27. So that no man ever had, or can have, any right knowledge of the true God, but only his Son our Saviour Christ. But by this means, they that lived before might see him as by twilight, we who live after this sun is risen, may see him by the clearest light that can be given

of.

of him, for he hath fully revealed and declared

him to us in the gospel.

By this glorious light we can fee into the myftery of the eternal trinity in unity, fo as to believe that God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are one Jehovah, one God. That God the Father made all things at the first by his word, and still upholds and orders all things according to his will. That God the Son was made flesh, became man, and as fuch died upon the crofs, and fo offered up himfelf as a facrifice for the fins of the whole world; that he rose again, went up to heaven, and is now there at the right hand of God; that upon our repentance and faith in him, our fins are all pardoned, and he that made us, is reconciled to us by the merits of his faid death; that by the power of his intercession, which he now makes in heaven for us, we are justified or accounted righteous in him, before his, and in him our almighty Father; that God the Holy Ghost abides continually with his church, moving upon, actuating and influencing the means of grace that are administred; that he fanctifies all that believe in Christ, leads them into all truth, comforts them in all their troubles, and affirts them in doing whatfoever is required of them. These, and many fuch great and necessary truths as lay in a great meafure hid before, are now, by the light of the fun of righteousness shining in his gospel, made so plain and evident, that all may fee them, except they wilfully shut their eyes, or turn their backs upon them.

And though the sun in the sirmament enlightens only the air, to make it a fit medium thro' which to see; this glorious light that comes from the sun of righteousness, enlightens men's minds too, and opens their eyes, to behold the wondrous things that are revealed in the law of God, Ps. cix. 18. And that too so effectually in some, that they likewise are able to enlighten others, to open their eyes, and turn them from darkness to light, Acts xxvi. 18. Insomuch that they also are the light of the world, Matt. v. 14. not originally in themselves, but by communication from him, as the moon is first enlightened by the sun, and

then reflects it light to the earth.

Moreover, the fun is the first cause under God, not only of light, but also of all the life that is in any creature upon earth, without which, nothing could life, no, not so much as a vegetable, much less an animal life; for that which we call live, wherewith fuch creatures as have organs fitted for it, are actuated and quickened, so as to be faid properly to live, it all depends upon the heat and influences of the fun; should the sun once cease to be, or to influence the world, all living creatures would immediately expire and die. So is Christ the fun of righteoufness, the fountain of all spiritual life. In thee, faith David, is the fountain of life, in thy light we shall see light, Psal. xxxvi. 9. Where we see that light and life in this sense also go together; they both proceed from the same fountain, the sun of righteousness, who therefore faith, I am the light of the world, be that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall bav: bave the light of life, John viii. 12. that light which hath life always proceeding from it, and accompanying it; so that he is both light and life it self. I am, saith he, the way, the truth, and the life, John xiv. 6. And our life, as the apostle calls him, Col. iii. 4, even the life of all that believe in him. The life that I now live in the sleep, saith the same apostle, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Gal. ii. 20. And therefore he who believeth, and so hath the Son, he hath life, and he that hath not the Son, hath

not life, 1 John v. 12.

From all which it appears, that all men by nature are dead in trespasses and sins, Eph. ii. 1. But when any arise from the dead by faith, it is Christ that gives them life, ch. v. 14. Who came into the world on purpose that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly, John x. 20. more abundantly, that is, in the highest and most excellent manner, that it is possible for men to live. For this life, which the sun of righteousness raiseth believers to, is the live of righteoufness, an holy, an heavenly, a spiritual, divine life; it is the life of faith, whereby they live to other purposes, and in a quite different manner from other men, they live to God, and not unto the world, they live in a constant dependance upon him, and submission to him; they live in a firm belief of his word, and fincere obedience to his laws; they live altogether in his fervice, fo that whether, they eat, or drink, or what soever they do, they still do it to the glory of God, I Cor. x. 31. In short, they strive all they can to do the will of God upon earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven, and heaven, and so have their conversation there, where their Saviour and their treasure is.

But this life is infused into them, only by the rays of the fun of righteoufness, by that holy Spirit which proceedeth from Christ, whereby they being born again, and made the children of light, thus walk in newness of life; and fo is nourished also, preserved and strengthned only by him, who therefore calls himself the bread of life, John vi. 35, 48. And the bread of God, which cometh from heaven, and giveth life unto the world, v. 33. the living bread, of which if any man eat, he shall live for ever, v. 51. And this bread which he gives, is his flesh, which he gave for the life of the world, ibid. For his flesh is meat indeed; and his blood is drink indeed; fo that whose eateth his flesh and drinketh his blood, bath eternal life, and he will raise him up at the last day, that he may live for ever, v. 54, 55, 58. For Christ is the resurrection and the life, whofoever believeth in him, tho' he were dead, yet shall be live, and whosever liveth and believeth in him, shall never die, ch. xi. 25, 26. Though his body may die, yet not his soul. And his body also at the last day shall be raised again to life, by the power of this glorious fun. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive, I Cor. xv. 22.

Seeing therefore that Jesus Christ is the fountain of the life of righteousness, the author of that spiritual and eternal life which the righteous live; as the sun is of our natural, he also may most properly be called the sun, and the sun of righteousness, as he is in the words before

us. And so he may be likewise from his chearing and refreshing our spirits in the inward man, as the fun doth to the outward. The light of the eyes, faith the wife man, rejoyceth the heart, Prov. xv. 30. And truly the light is fiveet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the fun, Eccl. xi. 7. This we all find by daily experience, and fo we do too, that the light and heat of the fun agitate or move our animal spirits in so benign and delicate a manner, that we are always more chearful and pleafant when the fun shines clearly, than we are in a dark night, or cloudy day. But in this the fun of righteousness infinitely exceeds the other, for he is the fountain, not only of some, but of all the true joy and comfort that his faithful people have, or ever can have in the world. It all proceeds from him, whom having not feen they love, in whom, though now they fee him not, yet believing they rejoyce, with joy unspeakable, and full of glory, 1 Pet. i. 8. For upon their believing in him, as having been deliver'd for their offences, and raifed again for their justification, he manifesteth himself, and his special love and favour to them, in the pardon of their fins, and their reconciliation to Almighty God, whereby their fouls are filled, not only with unspeakable, but glorious joy, of the same nature with that which the glorified faints in heaven are continually transported with. This is that which is called the lifting up the light of God's countenance, and his causing his face to shine upon them, Pfal. iv. 6. Pfal. lxvii. 1. Pf. 1xxx. 3. Numb. vi. 25. When the fun of righteousness

teousness thus shineth upon them, refreshing and comforting their hearts, by the sweet influences of that holy Spirit that proceedeth from him.

But the fun doth not only refresh the earth, but makes it fruitful; it is by his means, under God, that plants grow and bring forth fruit, and that animals do the respective works which God hath set them. So is Christ the cause or author of all the good and righteous works that are done in the world; he himself saith, without me ye can do nothing, John xv. 5. And his apostle could say upon his own experience, I can do all things through Christ that strengthneth me, Phil. iv. 13. And that the fruits, all the fruits of righteousness, are by Jesus Christ, or come from him, Chap. i. 11. who therefore in this respect also may well be termed the sun of Righ-

teousness.

To which we may likewise add, that as the works which God hath made upon earth by his power, altho' they have no light in themselves whereby they can be feen, yet they appear in all their beauty and colours by the fun reflecting his light upon them, fo the works which his fervants do, by his affiftance and grace, although they have no real worth, nor are exactly righteous in themselves, yet by the sun of righteousness reflecting his righteousness upon them, they feem, or are accounted righteous in the fight of God, or as St. Peter speaks, they are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. without whom therefore there could be no fuch thing as righteousness seen upon earth, no more than there could be colours without light. But as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one many are made righteous, Rom. v. 19. both fincerely righteous in themselves, and accepted of as righteous before God, by his righteousness imputed to them. So that all righteousness, both as it is performed by men, and as it is approved of by God, comes only from Jesus Christ. And this feems to be the great reason wherefore he is here call'd in a peculiar manner the fun of righteousness, and promifed to arise to his faithful people with healing in his wings, that they may grow up as calves in the stalls; to shew that it is by him only that they are healed of their infirmities, and restored to a sound mind, so as to grow in grace, and bring forth the fruits of righteousness, fuch righteoufness as by him is acceptable to God, from whom they shall therefore at the last day receive the crown of righteousness, that crown which this fun of righteousness hath procured for them.

Upon these, among many other accounts, Jesus Christ the Saviour of mankind may truly be called the sun of righteousness, as he is here by the spirit of truth it self, for our admonition and comfort. For hereby we are put in mind how to think of our blessed Saviour, and to exercise our faith in him, so as to love and honour him with all our hearts, and to put our whole trust and considence in him for all things necessary to our eternal salvation. For smuch as we are by this means given to understand, that what the sun is to this lower world, the same is Christ to his church. But the sun, as

we have heard, is the most excellent, and most glorious thing that we see in the world. It is the next cause, under God, of all the light that is in the air, and of all the life that any creatures live upon the earth. It is that which refresheth the earth, and makes it fruitful. It is that also which gives a lustre to all things that are about us, so as to make them pleasing and delightful

to the eye.

And accordingly, whenfoever I think of my blessed Saviour, the sun of righteousness, I apprehend, or rather by the eye of faith I behold him in the highest heavens, there shining in glory and splendor infinitely greater than any mortal eye can bear, invested with supreme majesty, honour and authority over the whole creation. I behold him there furrounded with an innumerable company of his holy angels, as fo many fixed stars, and of glorified faints as planets enlightned by him; all his Satellites or fervants waiting upon him, ready upon all occasions to reflect and convey his benign influences or favours to his people upon earth. I fee him yonder, by his own light; I behold him displaying his bright beams, and diffusing his light round about over his whole church, both that which is triumphant in heaven, and that which is militant here on earth; that all the members of it may fee all things belonging to their peace. I behold him continually fending down his quickening Spirit upon those who are baptized into, and believe in his holy name, to regenerate them, to be a standing principle of a new and divine life in them. behold himthere manifesting himself, and causing his

his face to shine upon those who look up to him fo as to refresh and chear their spirits, to make them brisk and lively, and able to run with patience the race that is set before them. I behold him there continually iffuing forth his holy Spirit, to actuate and influence the administration of his word and facraments; that all who duly receive them may thereby grow in grace, and be fruitful in every good word and work. I behold the fun of righteousness shining with so much power and efficacy upon his church, that all the good works which are done in it, though imperfect in themselves, do notwithstanding appear through him as good and righteous in the fight of God himself, and are accordingly rewarded In fhort, as the fun was made to rule and govern the day, fo I behold the fun of righteoufness as governing his church, and ordering all things both within it and without it, so as to make them work together for the good of those who love God, till he hath brought them all to himself, to live with him in the highest heavens, where they also shall by his means shine forth as the fun in the kingdom of their father for ever, Mat. xiii. 43.

Could we keep these and such like thoughts of our blessed Saviour always fresh in our minds, could we be always thus looking upon him, as the sun of righteousness shining continually upon us and his whole church, what holy, what heavenly, what comfortable lives should we then lead? We should then despise the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, as nothing, as less than nothing in comparison of this most glorious

fun and his righteousness. We should then, with St. Paul, count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord, and should count them but dung that we may win Christ, and be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9. We should then leave gazing upon the trisles of this lower world, and should be always looking up to this sun of righteousness, so as to be enlightned by him, Ps. xxxiv. 5. with such a light as will discover to us the glories of the other world, together with the way that leads to it.

We should then abhor and detest the works of darkness, and walk as the children of light, and accordingly shine as lights in the world. And then we should have the light of God's countenance shining continually upon us, enlightning, enlivening, and refreshing our whole souls, and purifying both our hearts and lives so, as to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light; in that everlasting light which comes from the sun of righteousness, who liveth and reigneth, and shineth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God, blessed for ever.

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